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THE TIMES OF ST. GREGORY OF NYSSA
AS REFLECTED IN THE LETTERS AND
THE CONTRA EUNOMIUM

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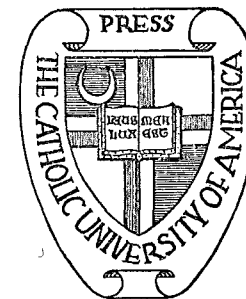
A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND
SCIENCES OF THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY
SISTER THOMAS AQUINAS GOGGIN, M.A.

OF
THE SISTERS OF CHARITY
HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA

This dissertation was written under the direction of Very Reverend James Marshall Campbell, Ph.D., as Major Professor, and was approved by Professor Roy J. Deferrari, Ph.D. and Reverend Doctor Martin J. Higgins as readers.



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE	xi
ABBREVIATIONS	xv
SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY	xvii
CHAPTER	
I. ECONOMIC AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE	1
A. Climate and Weather	1
B. The Soil and Its Products	4
1. The Soil	4
2. Plants and Fruits	5
3. Timber	7
4. Other Building Materials	10
C. Metals	10
D. Other Natural Features	11
1. The Sea	11
2. Water Supply	11
3. Miscellaneous	12
E. Animals	12
1. Birds and Insects	12
2. Fish	15
3. Other Animals	18
F. Professions and Crafts	19
1. Craftsmen and Their Handiwork	19
2. Agriculture	21
3. Sea-faring	22
4. Medicine and Allied Professions	22
5. Architecture and Sculpture	25
6. Painting	28
7. Stenography and Scribes	29
8. Miscellaneous Occupations	30
G. Labor and Wages	30
H. Poverty and Wealth	34
II. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL LIFE	36
A. Women	36
B. Morals	38

CHAPTER	PAGE
C. Travel and Pilgrimages	42
1. Pilgrimages	42
2. Means of Travel	45
3. Inns	46
4. Place Names	48
D. Letter-Writing	51
E. Manners	66
1. In General	66
2. Attitude to Miscellaneous Features of Fourth Century Life	68
F. Dwellings, Food, Clothing, etc.	76
G. Amusements and Sports	78
H. The Army and Warfare	81
I. Miscellaneous References to Social Life	82
J. Political Life	83
1. Church and State	83
a. Interference by the State in Church Affairs	84
b. Power of the Church in State Affairs	87
2. References to Fourth Century Political History ..	87
3. Civil Administration and Officials	88
III. INTELLECTUAL LIFE	92
A. The Attitude of a Church Father toward Pagan Learning	92
B. Fourth Century Education	96
C. Rhetoric	98
1. The Place of Rhetoric in Education	98
2. Fourth Century Sophists and Their Audience	99
3. The Attitude of a Church Father toward Rhetoric ..	106
4. The Second Sophistic: Asianism and Atticism	109
D. Pagan Letters	112
1. Philosophy	114
a. Plato	114
b. Aristotle	115
c. Other Philosophers	117
2. Oratory	117
a. Demosthenes	117
b. Isocrates	118
3. Poetry	119
a. Homer	119
b. Suggestions of Other Poets	120
4. Traditional Lore	122
5. Alexandrianism	122

CHAPTER	PAGE
E. Notions on Language	123
F. Science	126
1. Astronomy	129
2. Botany	132
3. Geography	133
4. Mathematics	134
5. Physics	134
6. Zoology	136
7. Medicine	137
a. Disease and Its Cure	137
b. Drugs and Poisons	140
c. Anatomy	141
d. Physiology	142
IV. CHRISTIAN SOCIETY	145
A. Activities of Heretics, Pagans, and Jews	145
1. Relations of Christians with Heretics	145
2. References to Pagans and Jews	154
B. Bishops and Clergy	155
1. The Method of Choosing a Bishop	155
2. The Qualities Considered Desirable in a Bishop ..	157
3. The Extent of the Wealth and Power of Bishops ..	158
4. Activities of Bishops	161
5. Relations of Bishops with One Another	163
6. Famous Episcopal Traditions	166
7. The Clergy	167
C. Christian Life and Customs	168
1. Holydays and Festivals	168
2. The Cult of Martyrs	171
3. Miscellaneous Features of the Christian Cult	173
4. Life Consecrated to God	175
V. THE TESTIMONY OF THE LETTERS AND THE CONTRA EUNOMIUM TO FOURTH CENTURY LIFE AND TIMES	178
I. INDEX NOMINUM	211
II. INDEX RERUM	214

PREFACE

The name of St. Gregory of Nyssa suggests first of all the philosopher and the theologian, for his works have been frequently exploited in the service of theology and philosophy and by the historian of Christian literature. The Church historian, too, from the time of Tillemont to our own has found them valuable primary sources for the story of fourth century Christianity and especially for the Arian controversy. To some extent they have served the needs of the student of the political life of the period, such as Seeck. They have been used by Norden and Méridier, among others, for the abundant evidence they give with regard to a variety of matters in the field of rhetoric. Gorce has drawn from *Epistle II* data regarding pilgrimages and travel. And Ramsay has found references to place-names, notably in the *Letters* and the *Contra Eunomium*, useful in his geographical studies on Asia Minor. Isolated items of information, gleaned from these works again, support the statements found in encyclopedic works of reference on life in ancient times, and sporadic articles on several of the *Letters* are scattered in periodicals. None of these studies, however, pretends to have used the last scrap of evidence from St. Gregory which is relevant to its particular theme, and all of them legitimately omit many of his references which are necessary nonetheless to a comprehensive picture of the times in which he lived.

In the present study theological and philosophical references are not considered, though they bulk so large in St. Gregory's works and in the times which his works mirror. But all the rest of the allusions to life and times in the *Letters* and the *Contra Eunomium* are assembled and studied here as a contribution to the comprehensive account of life in the fourth century which will one day be written.¹ It was my original purpose to include all the pertinent references in all St. Gregory's works. I soon discovered, however,

¹ Such a project as the monumental *Economic Survey of Ancient Rome* is a step toward making good this deficiency, but its scope extends barely to the first half of the fourth century.

that though the letters are few in number, and the *Contra Eunomium* a controversial work on religious matters, I had abundant materials for a monograph.

I have extracted exhaustively from these works all allusions to economic, social, political, and intellectual life, both Christian and non-Christian. These have been sifted and assorted, and as far as possible ranged alongside opposite information which we already possess. I realize only too well the trivial and commonplace character of many of the references considered in themselves. In deciding on an exhaustive treatment even at the risk of banality, I was guided by the ultimate purpose of this dissertation. I had no way of knowing in advance that apparently trivial items would not, in the hands of the future historian with the wealth of material gleaned from other sources at his disposal, prove to be of considerable significance. Hence all references of any pertinence howsoever trifling have been included.

It may be well to remind the reader of certain difficulties which attend the recognition and interpretation of testimony of the kind in an author such as St. Gregory. Caution must be exercised in admitting as evidence references occurring in the many rhetorical and ornamental passages, lest the topoi of rhetors or excerpts from fourth century "encyclopedias" be incorporated as genuine witness to fourth century life. Moreover, further difficulty crops up intermittently because of St. Gregory's vagueness and prolixity. This is especially troublesome in dealing with allusions to persons or the weather, since it is often impossible to determine his precise whereabouts when he made this or that specific statement. It is quite certain nevertheless that the period covered by the *Letters* and the *Contra Eunomium* was spent in Cappadocia or in occasional journeys to such regions as Jerusalem and the Pontus. In the light of the restricted nature of his perambulations then, it has seemed safe to assume that what he lets fall about his milieu refers to the plateau of Asia Minor, or lands immediately adjacent, and their inhabitants. Finally, St. Gregory's sensitive disposition has to be taken into account in assessing references to those whom he considered inimical to him, and allusions to the hardships he was forced to suffer.

I have been indeed fortunate in having available the splendid critical texts of Pasquali for the *Letters* and of Jaeger for the *Contra Eunomium*. These were used both in collecting the material and in citing the references. I have endeavored to weave the heterogeneous mass of evidence into a coherent and connected whole, supporting allusions with exact foot-note references. Translations incorporated into the text are my own, but influenced considerably by those already in existence. Jaeger's and Pasquali's foot-notes to their texts have proved unusually helpful. The problem of the order of the books of the *Contra Eunomium* need not concern us here since it has been treated adequately elsewhere,² and I follow Jaeger's numeration throughout. Several Master's dissertations in the department of Greek and Latin of the Catholic University of America deserve special mention for the valuable groundwork they provided on some of the *Letters*.³

It should be noted that the few citations taken from Epistle V refer to the first printing of that letter in Pasquali's text,⁴ since these references are not altered by the few changes made in the later recension.⁵

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the Very Reverend Dr. James Marshall Campbell, Professor of Greek and Latin and Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, who suggested the topic of this dissertation and who has given very generously of his time and offered many valuable suggestions in the direction of my work. I am indebted as well to Reverend Dr. Martin J. Higgins, Assistant Professor of Greek and of Byzantine History, and to Professor Roy J. Deferrari, Ph.D., Head of the Department of Greek and Latin, for careful reading of the manuscript. It is a pleasure also to acknowledge my debt of gratitude to Professor Martin R. P. McGuire, Ph.D., for much helpful advice and for constructive criticism of the manuscript, and to Sister M. Monica, C.S.C., Ph.D., for allowing me to use in manuscript form her

² Diekamp, Fr. "Literargeschichtliches zu der Eunomianischen Kontroverse," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 18 (1909), 1-13. Cf. Jaeger II, *Prolegomena* VII ff.

³ Cf. Bibliography.

⁴ 29-31.

⁵ 89-92.

Dumbarton Oaks monograph on epistolography. My thanks are due likewise to Mr. Robert H. Haynes and members of the staff of the Widener Library of Harvard University for unfailing courtesy and efficient service extended to me over a period of several years. To Mother Mary Evaristus I am especially grateful for her kindly interest and encouragement, and I desire to thank as well the other members of my Community who have helped in any way to further the progress of my work.

Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, 1947.

ABBREVIATIONS

I. WORKS OF REFERENCE

Acta SS	<i>Acta Sanctorum</i>	Bollandists
CAH	<i>Cambridge Ancient History</i>	
CMH	<i>Cambridge Medieval History</i>	
DACL	<i>Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie</i>	Cabrol-Leclercq
DCB	<i>Dictionary of Christian Biography</i>	Smith and Wace
DGRA	<i>Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities</i>	Smith
DHGE	<i>Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques</i>	Baudrillart
DS	<i>Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines</i>	Daremberg-Saglio
DTC	<i>Dictionnaire de théologie catholique</i>	Vacant et Mangenot
ESAR	<i>Economic Survey of Ancient Rome IV</i>	Frank et al.
LS	<i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i>	Liddell-Scott
LTK	<i>Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche</i>	Buchberger
MM	<i>Handbuch der römischen Altertümer</i>	Marquardt-Mommsen
PG	<i>Patrologia Graeca</i>	Migne
PL	<i>Patrologia Latina</i>	Migne
PW	<i>Realencyclopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft</i>	Pauly-Wissowa-Kroll
SIFC	<i>Studi Italiani di Filologia Classica, Nuova Serie, III (1923)</i>	
Theol. Quartalschr.	<i>Theologische Quartalschrift</i>	

II. THE LETTERS AND THE CONTRA EUNOMIUM

- J *Contra Eunomium Libri*, edited by W. Jaeger.
P *Gregorii Nysseni Epistulae*, edited by G. Pasquali.

The following are typical references to these works:

- Ep. XII P 40,19 - 41,2 means
Letter XII, *Gregorii Nysseni Epistulae*, page 40, line 19, to page 41, line 2.
J I 268,29 - 269,5 means
Contra Eunomium Libri, Vol. I, page 268, line 29 to page 269, line 5.

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CHAPTER I

ECONOMIC AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE

The references to economic and professional life in the *Letters* and the *Contra Eunomium* do not generally and of themselves shed much light on those features of the world of St. Gregory of Nyssa. Allusions to various occupations and to labor and wages are sometimes illuminating. Most of the references, however, are of that brief and casual and scattered sort which merely corroborate, or elaborate but slightly, information extracted from elsewhere.

A. CLIMATE AND WEATHER

Saint Gregory makes some casual remarks to his correspondents regarding the weather, the seasons of the year, and the climate of Cappadocia and of adjacent sections of interior Asia Minor. At one time such a remark occurs in illustration of a homely truth;¹ again, in one of the elaborately rhetorical introductions to his letters.² Modern travellers and explorers, such as Sir William Ramsay, have found that on the great level plains of the central plateau of Asia Minor there is "a long severe winter and a shorter but hot summer."³ St. Gregory's scattered references seem to indicate a similar climatic condition in his day.⁴ He gives information supplementary to what we already know of the rigors of winter in Anatolia in a letter written at a time of great stress. In order to make his correspondent understand what cold incivility he was receiving from his neighbors, he illustrates with something which he says is commonly observed in the neighborhood. He describes how ice sometimes formed on the roofs of houses from accumulated moisture and how the mass of ice thus formed grew larger by

¹ Ep. XII P 41, 10-16.

² Ep. XII P 40,19 - 41,2.

³ Ramsay (2) 273. Cf. "Kappadokia" PW X 1912.

⁴ Cf. ESAR 604.

degrees as more water dripped upon it.⁶ The weather must have been cold with a fairly constant temperature to bring about this result.

Out-door work on a farm was rendered unfeasible by the cold of winter, for in the *Contra Eunomium* we are told how a farmer dwelling on the borders of Cappadocia earned his living at this season "when he had respite from the labors of the soil," by "ingeniously carving out the letters of the alphabet and syllables for children."⁶

St. Gregory gives further testimony to the bitterness of the winter season by implication, when he speaks of the spring as "sweet" and "desirable" after the storms of winter.⁷ Saint Basil likewise alludes in his letters to the pleasant coming of spring.⁸ Both writers evidently found the rigors of the winter season harsh and unpleasant enough to justify occasional comment. In a lyric passage which forms the rhetorical introduction to one of his letters, St. Gregory waxes eloquent on the "loveliness" of spring. It does not come all at once, he says, but as a prelude there are: "the sunbeam gently warming the frozen surface of the earth," and "a flower half-seen lying hidden beneath the clod," and "breezes blowing over the earth." One may see "freshly sprouting grass," and "the return of the birds which winter had driven away."⁹ He tells one of his correspondents that "the comforts of God through your kindness have cheered my soul like sunbeams which warm up our life disfigured by frost."¹⁰ Again, he speaks with a rhetorical flourish of "the springtime of eloquence," referring to the pleasure which a welcome letter has brought him.¹¹

⁶ Ep. XII P 41, 10-16. Just where St. Gregory was when he wrote this letter is a matter of conjecture. Possibly he was in exile, or in Nyssa during the troubled period just before his exile. Pasquali thinks he was at Sebastea. Cf. SIFC 92-96. Whatever his exact location he was at any rate either in Cappadocia or in one of the Roman provinces bordering upon it.

⁷ J I 36, 18-22.

⁸ Ep. XII P 41, 23-26.

⁹ Cf. Fox 4-5.

¹⁰ Ep. XII P 40, 19 - 41, 2.

¹¹ Ep. X P 37, 22 - 38, 1.

¹² Ep. XXVIII P 83, 9. I follow Pasquali in considering this letter as an authentic part of the corpus of the works of St. Gregory. Cf. Maas 994 ff. and 998-999; Fox 4-5.

Spring does not last long in the interior of Asia Minor but gives way quickly to the intense heat of summer. Ramsay more than once refers to the strong contrast there between the length and severity of winter and the brief but intense heat of summer.¹² St. Gregory's single reference to heat as a climatic condition attests that very hot weather could be experienced in this region in his day as well. In recounting his humiliating visit to Helladius he mentions as adding to his discomfort the fact that the heat on that day was "intense," and at noon, "excessive."¹³

In his various works on Asia Minor Ramsay frequently speaks of sudden thunder-showers on the central plateau where Cappadocia is located. He warns prospective travellers in this region of the advisability of carrying with them at all times a water-proof cloak, a commodity which he found quite indispensable because of sudden heavy thunderstorms.¹⁴ St. Gregory too had distressing experience of this kind of weather. For example, he narrates that as he was returning from his visit to Helladius a cloud, which a turbulent wind suddenly caused to form, discharged violent rain which "pierced to our very marrow."¹⁵

On another occasion he was hard by "our little town," that is, Nyssa when he and his travelling companions were forced to interrupt their journey. They had left behind them the little village Kelosina,¹⁶ when "on a sudden a dense mass of clouds formed," and the atmosphere which had been clear suddenly became exceedingly dark.

A sort of chill breeze, moisture-laden and very damp, striking against our bodies threatened rain as never be-

¹² Ramsay (3) 23. Cf. note 3 *supra*.

¹³ Ep. I P 4, 4; 8, 19; 9, 2. Helladius, successor to St. Basil in the see of Caesarea, also had unfriendly relations with St. Gregory Nazianzen. Cf. "Helladius" DCB II 889; pp. 163-166 ff. *infra*.

¹⁴ Ramsay (4) 292-293.

¹⁵ Ep. I P 8, 26 - 9, 2.

¹⁶ Ramsay (3) 412, mentions it as a village unknown in his day. It seems likely that this journey was to Nyssa. The context also seems to indicate that he was returning from exile but he may equally have been coming from Antioch, or Sebastea, or Constantinople, according to Pasquali, SIFC 101. The location of Vestena seems to rule out Constantinople, however. See Ramsay (3) map opposite p. 204.

fore, and at the left continuous thunder broke forth and swift flashes of lightning one upon the other heralded the thunder, while all the mountains before, behind, and on both sides were laden with clouds.¹⁷

The travellers wisely took shelter at a nearby village,¹⁸ and the saint declares with simplicity that it was not until they were under cover that "the signal for the shower was given to the air by God." The shower which ensued lasted for three or four hours, a not unwelcome rest period for the weary travellers. And when they had had enough of rest, he continues, "God once more interrupted the shower." As they went on "there was a drizzling rain, not unpleasant, merely moistening the air," but just before they reached their destination there was a still more violent shower so that at first no one perceived their arrival.¹⁹

B. THE SOIL AND ITS PRODUCTS

1. The Soil

St. Gregory does not testify directly to the natural fertility of the soil of the Anatolian plateau as noted by modern writers²⁰ and by St. Basil.²¹

His references to the soil are incidental and of no special significance. Typical of these is a rhetorical passage where he speaks of the soil as "sweet" to the farmer, both when the crops are growing in abundance and when they are ready for the harvest.²² He says elsewhere naively that in spring breezes blow upon the earth "so that productiveness and fruitfulness pass into it deeply from the air."²³

¹⁷ Ep. VI P 32, 5-14.

¹⁸ Vestena; for its location cf. Ramsay (3) 287.

¹⁹ Ep. VI P 32, 19 - 33, 11.

²⁰ Ramsay (5) 554-555 and 557; cf. Banse 100.

²¹ Cf. Fox 6-8.

²² Ep. X P 37, 14-16.

²³ Ep. XII P 40, 22-24.

2. Plants and Fruits

The most detailed account of products of the soil is found in Letter XX where St. Gregory enthusiastically describes the country estate which he was visiting at Vanota.²⁴ It was situated on the Halys river²⁵ at a spot which was evidently very fertile²⁶ and especially adapted to the growth of the vine, for he tells us how vines spread themselves "like a green cloak" over the mounds and hollows at the base of the nearby mountain. He marvels that at a season when the grapes in the neighborhood were still unripe, it was possible at Vanota to enjoy an abundance of ripe clusters.²⁷

Not only the vine but trees as well flourished there. He mentions the "foliage of oaks on every side" and "wide-spaced and high-arching rows of plane-trees."²⁸

Besides the grape other fruits were also to be enjoyed at Vanota, such as the apple, the pear, and various kinds of peaches. "Homer does not know the apple-tree as it is here 'bearing goodly fruit,' rivalling the complexion of its own blossom by the surpassing loveliness of its beautiful coloring. Nor does he know the pear whiter than freshly-polished ivory," declares St. Gregory.²⁹ The peach too awakens his admiration³⁰ especially because of the numerous varieties found on this estate, varieties which he attributes to grafting.³¹ He tells how one is like an almond, another like a wal-

²⁴ P 66-70. Cf. Müller *passim* esp. 67 and 78-82. I agree that Ep. XX must not be considered a mere rhetorical exercise, but the highly polished description of an actual estate given by an eye-witness. Pasquali, SIFC 126, disagrees with this view. For the origin of the name Vanota cf. Müller 67-74.

²⁵ Ep. XX P 67, 10. This is the only incontestable fact about its location. Müller, 82, deduces reasonably that it lay outside the immediate neighborhood of Nyssa, probably down the Halys in Galatia proper. Ramsay (3) 288, places it near Nyssa, but with no cogent proof.

²⁶ On the fertility of the Halys Valley, cf. Strabo 572, and Charlesworth 78.

²⁷ Ep. XX P 67, 19-26. For a suggested emendation of the text, cf. Müller 74, note 1.

²⁸ Ep. XX P 67, 14; 68, 5-6.

²⁹ P 68, 9-12.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 12-20. On the peach in antiquity, cf. "Cibaria" DS I 1152; M-M XV 50-51; Müller 80 and note.

³¹ Ep. XX P 68, 17-20. The words *τυραννηθεῖσα παρὰ τῆς τέχνης ἡ φύσις ἐποίησε* make it plain that St. Gregory thought the varieties the result of grafting. For a discussion of the point cf. p. 132 *infra*.

nut, and another like the duracinus.³² He was served clusters of grapes in baskets made of twigs and, as he says with characteristic rhetorical ponderosity, "he could partake of the variegated munificence of the fruit."³³

Scientific gardening at Vanota is attested by a reference to the landscaping of the estate. So beautiful was it that it seemed to the Saint to be like something achieved by an artist rather than by a husbandman.³⁴ One path was fenced off on either side by a natural barrier of roses and grape vines growing entwined and "sweet shade" was cast by over-arching vines.³⁵

In addition to the references found in Epistle XX there are allusions to the vine but three times elsewhere in the *Letters* and the *Contra Eunomium*, and these are of the kind which could have come as well from encyclopedias as from personal observation.³⁶

Two references to grain may be noted.³⁷

Of flowers he mentions only the rose by name.³⁸ With lyric appreciation of the spring season he thrice alludes to the beauty of a flower in spring.³⁹ In the same connection he notes the freshly sprouting grass.⁴⁰

³² Probably the Greek *δωράκιον* is best rendered thus. The duracinus was a variety of peach known already in Pliny's day, and described by him. Cf. *N.H.* XV 12; "Cibaria" DS I 1152.

³³ Ep. XX P 69, 32-34. For the fruits and nuts produced in Cappadocia in antiquity, cf. ESAR 611.

³⁴ Ep. XX P 68, 22-26.

³⁵ P 68, 26-31. All this is significant coming from the scion of a great landholding Cappadocian family. His raptures seem to indicate that what St. Gregory observed at Vanota was not what he was accustomed to see on large estates; hence that the Roman type of villa was not common in fourth century Cappadocia. Cf. for the same opinion Müller 77. On the contrary Pasquali, who regards Epistle XX as a mere rhetorical exercise, feels that St. Gregory was describing something typical of Cappadocia in his day and that the letter betrays the fact that the Cappadocians had borrowed the luxury of Roman villas. Cf. note 24 *supra* and chap. II, note 261.

³⁶ Ep. X P 37, 16-18; J II 33, 9-30; J I 268,29 - 269,5.

³⁷ Ep. XVII P 50, 28-30; J I 318, 6-10.

³⁸ Ep. XXVIII P 82, 20-21. The rose is also the only flower mentioned in the *Letters* of St. Augustine; cf. Keenan 3.

³⁹ Ep. X P 37, 12; Ep. XII P 40, 20-22; 41,7.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 40, 24.

As to other products of the soil, St. Gregory mentions the fact that the juice of figs tastes somewhat like honey.⁴¹

He uses as an illustration the herb chamomile which, he says, smells like the apple.⁴²

Other allusions in this category seem to be from the Bible and from literary and folk tradition.⁴³

3. Timber

Cappadocia has been and is remarkable for its lack of timber. Tozer, for example, notes as his observation in central Cappadocia in modern times "the absence of trees which is so remarkable a feature of the interior of Asia Minor."⁴⁴ Strabo remarks upon this condition as prevailing throughout the region, with the exception of the neighborhood of Mt. Argaeus, in his day.⁴⁵ Epistle XXV of St. Gregory witnesses similarly to the dearth of trees in at least a section of Cappadocia.⁴⁶ When he wrote this letter concerning the construction of a shrine, he told his correspondent that in the region where the shrine was to be built there was such a scarcity of timber suitable for roofing that he was forced to decide to roof the whole building with masonry.⁴⁷ In the same letter he reveals that he had to reckon costs very carefully in this undertaking in order to make it possible financially.⁴⁸ Even though a roof of masonry would be more expensive, ordinarily speaking, than one of

⁴¹ J II 356, 19-22.

⁴² J II 23-25. Cf. LS, s.v. *χαμαίμηνλος*.

⁴³ The lotus: Ep. XIX P 65, 25-26. The hellebore: J I 162, 14-15. The mandrake: J II 73, 20. Darnel: J I 35, 4-6. For lists of vegetables, seasonings, etc., used in antiquity, cf. "Gartenbau" PW VII 768-841; "Gemusebau" PW VII 1119-1129; "Hortus" DS III 290-293, ESAR 612-613 and literature there cited. For similar references in St. Augustine's works cf. Marrou 138-139.

⁴⁴ Tozer, *Turkish Armenia and Eastern Asia Minor*, 53. Cf. ESAR 616; Charlesworth 91.

⁴⁵ Strabo 538; cf. ESAR 604.

⁴⁶ P 76-80.

⁴⁷ Ep. XXV P 78,25 - 79,1. The shrine is not located by St. Gregory but it was to be built in all probability in Cappadocia, or at least in the vicinity of that country.

⁴⁸ Ep. XXV P 79,30 - 80,11.

wood, in this case the cost of obtaining timber from a distance was so prohibitive as to make the masonry roof more feasible for the bishop with his restricted budget.

On the other hand Letters XXVI and XXVII⁴⁹ somewhat paradoxically it would seem at first glance, imply that St. Gregory was in control of a considerable supply of timber.⁵⁰ In Epistle XXVI the sophist Stagirus⁵¹ asks St. Gregory to obtain for him a large supply of timber in order that he may not be obliged to spend the winter roofless, in the open air.⁵² Beams for roofing, then, were in question here as in Epistle XXV. In a reply which is couched in the witty and playful manner of the sophist's letter, the saint agrees to see that a goodly number of beams—three hundred of them⁵³—are sent to Stagirus. The latter had suggested in his letter, evidently to expedite matters, that the bishop use the presbyter of Osiana as intermediary in the transaction.⁵⁴ St. Gregory replies that the beams have been promised him by a cer-

⁴⁹ P 80-82. Formerly included in the correspondence of St. Basil and Libanius and only recently added to the corpus of St. Gregory's works. Cf. Maas 988-993, 995-998, and 1118. Also P LXI-LXIII and 80-81.

⁵⁰ Ep. XX which testifies to the luxuriant growth of trees at Vanota does not further complicate the question, for in all probability Vanota was situated on the lower reaches of the Halys, well outside the comparatively barren central Anatolian plateau. Cf. Müller 82; ESAR 616-617 and 604-605; Maas, 996, discounts the description of trees at Vanota as purely imaginative *ecphrasis* but this seems unnecessary in the light of evidence here cited *passim*.

⁵¹ Our information about Stagirus is at best very scanty. The sources are Greg. Naz., *Epp.* 165, 166, 188, 190, 192; and Greg. Nys., *Epp.* IX, XXVI and XXVII. Cf. "Stageiros" PW R. 2 III 2125. He was a professional teacher of rhetoric, a friend of St. Gregory Nazianzen, and probably a friend of St. Gregory of Nyssa. For a brief summary of our knowledge of him cf. Maas 995-996.

⁵² Ep. XXVI P 81, 1-8.

⁵³ Stagirus had asked for "many hundreds." Cf. Ep. XXVI P 81, 6. St. Gregory replies, "I have ordered that there should be given to you, who in all your studies plume yourself upon the Persian war, beams equal in number to the soldiers fighting at Thermopylae," Ep. XXVII P 82, 11-13. The traditional number of Spartans who perished at Thermopylae was three hundred. Cf. Hdt. VII 228.

⁵⁴ Ep. XXVI P 81, 8-10. Maas, 996, suggests that the presbyter may have acted merely as the messenger to whom the letters were entrusted.

tain person⁵⁵ who specified "not ten thousand or twenty thousand beams, but just as many as will be convenient for the person requested to furnish and for the receiver to return."⁵⁶ He intended then to use an intermediary as suggested, but whether this person was actually the presbyter of Osiana is not apparent. At any rate, the mention of Osiana gives at least a clue to reconcile the scarcity of wood in Epistle XXV with its abundance in Epistles XXVI and XXVII.

The town of Osiana has been located by geographers and explorers on the road which ran from Nyssa⁵⁷ to Caesarea, about fifty-eight Roman miles from the latter city and about thirty-two Roman miles from Nyssa.⁵⁸ Strabo speaks of extensive groves as covering the sides of Mt. Argaeus which is adjacent to Caesarea, and tells us specifically that these forests formed a contrast to the bareness of the remainder of Cappadocia.⁵⁹ It is quite probable that this region was still wooded in the fourth century. We do not know definitely either the location of the shrine which St. Gregory was having constructed or the place to which Stagirus wished his timber to be delivered. We may safely infer, however, that the shrine was to be located in a place too remote to make the bringing of wood from Argaeus practicable. Stagirus, on the other hand, must have been somewhere near Osiana, but closer to the timber supply of Mt. Argaeus. It is not improbable therefore that he was

⁵⁵ Whether this is the presbyter of Osiana or not, we do not know. St. Gregory calls him *ὁ ἱερεὺς δεῖναι* which leaves the question open to discussion. In this I follow the reading of Pasquali, 82, 15. The text is corrupt at the end of Ep. XXVII. Maas, 994-995, accepts *Δῖος* and suggests that it may be a proper name, presumably of the presbyter. Deferrari, IV 316, has *Ἀλφειός* following another variant. For still other variants cf. P. 82, crit. apparatus.

⁵⁶ Ep. XXVII P 82, 16-18.

⁵⁷ The exact location of Nyssa is still a much mooted question, but we know at least the general vicinity in which it was situated. Müller, 82-84, has gathered up the opinions of various authorities on the subject and the evidences in Gregory's works, especially in Epistles VI and XX. Cf. "Nyssa" LTK VII 650.

⁵⁸ Cf. Ramsay (3) 269 and 295; Kiepert Map IV (Asia Minor); Cuntz 29; Maas 996.

⁵⁹ Strabo 538. Cf. Jones, *Eastern Roman Provinces*, 179.

at Caesarea,⁶⁰ and that the beams were to be brought only the comparatively short distance from Mt. Argaeus to that city through the instrumentality of the presbyter of Osiana.

4. Other Building Materials

St. Gregory tells a correspondent that in the section of Cappadocia where the shrine was to be located there was no stone suitable for dressed stone-work but sufficient brick clay.⁶¹ Some stones of inferior quality and not suited for dressed stone were available, however, and could be incorporated into the building.⁶²

C. METALS

There are a few casual references to metals in the *Letters* and the *Contra Eunomium*.⁶³ In St. Gregory's day iron, heated and moulded by blows, was made into useful objects, such as a shovel,⁶⁴ a fish-hook,⁶⁵ the tool of a shoemaker,⁶⁶ and a gimlet,⁶⁷ he tells us, by the smith as he plied his trade.⁶⁸ This would indicate that iron was still plentiful at that time in central Asia Minor.

⁶⁰ Maas, 996, claims that both letters (XXVI and XXVII) confirm what had seemed probable before their discovery, viz., that Stagirus taught in Caesarea, but he does not substantiate his statement. As a matter of fact, nothing in either letter tells us in so many words where Stagirus taught. Maas' contention is upheld, though it is not proven, by the fact that if three hundred beams of wood were to be sent to Stagirus from the vicinity of Mt. Argaeus, then he was likely to be somewhere near at hand. For a sophist the most attractive place in the neighborhood was undoubtedly Caesarea. Maas, *ibid.*, assumes that the timber was brought to Caesarea from Osiana and concludes that a scarcity of wood prevailed around Caesarea.

⁶¹ Ep. XXV P 79, 4-6.

⁶² Good building stone was plentiful almost everywhere in Asia Minor and local stone was regularly used except where a special display was desired. Cf. ESAR 624-625.

⁶³ The list of metals mentioned tallies well with the evidence of other sources regarding the metals mined in antiquity in Asia Minor. Cf. *ibid.* 620-623.

⁶⁴ J I 151, 7-9.

⁶⁵ J II 74, 1.

⁶⁶ J I 93, 10.

⁶⁷ J I 143, 8.

⁶⁸ J II 58; Ep. XVII, P 54, 4-6.

We learn that a smith within St. Gregory's lifetime fraudulently replaced a woman's golden trinket by a similar one made of copper coated with gold.⁶⁹

Tin and lead are also mentioned as materials used by the smith. He employed lead especially for mending corroded metal vessels, our author tells us.⁷⁰

He alludes casually in one instance to a kind of horologium made of bronze.⁷¹

D. OTHER NATURAL FEATURES

1. The Sea

The sea is much in evidence in many ancient writers, but not in the land-locked Gregory. His seven brief allusions are conventional and too colorless to make it evident whether he shared in the dread of the sea so characteristic of Greek and Roman antiquity.⁷²

2. Water Supply

In Cappadocia the conservation of the water supply has ever been a pressing problem, as Ramsay and others testify.⁷³ St. Gregory mentions an aqueduct by way of illustration in one of his letters in such a matter of fact way that it is clear that aqueducts were common in the Asia Minor of his day. He asks the presbyters of Nicomedia to whom Letter XVII is addressed what benefit a thirsty man gets from a grand aqueduct which contains no water. Even if this aqueduct be elaborately constructed of marble with columns to uphold the roof, the thirsty man would prefer a spring flowing from a wooden pipe provided the water be clear and

⁶⁹ J I 33, 19 - 34, 1. On the veracity of the tale, cf. note 138 *infra*. Additional casual references to gold are as follows: Ep. XIV P 44, 16-18; Ep. IV P 26, 20-21; and J II 356, 26 - 357, 1.

⁷⁰ J I 33, 14. Cf. ESAR 826; and p. 20 *infra*.

⁷¹ J I 265, 13. An additional reference to bronze is found in J I 133, 23.

⁷² Ep. X P 37, 13-14; J I 64, 21-23; 128, 10; 137, 12-14; 265, 18; J II 21, 23-25; 204, 8-11. On the attitude of antiquity to the sea cf. Michell 5-6.

⁷³ Ramsay (5) 557; cf. Fox 6-8.

fresh.⁷⁴ In the same letter he alludes to the fact that a defect sometimes developed in an aqueduct. If not repaired at once it was increasingly difficult to mend.⁷⁵ There was an overseer in charge to see to repairs.⁷⁶

3. Miscellaneous

To illustrate the varying results which ensue when fire comes in contact with different objects St. Gregory observes that clay when heated hardens, wax melts,⁷⁷ so does bronze, but asbestos is unaffected being merely "bathed" by the flame.⁷⁸

Flint is mentioned once in another connection⁷⁹ as also bird-lime.⁸⁰ These trivialities, which may be culled as readily from compendia as from personal observation, tells us, of course, nothing of the times except to assure us that St. Gregory manifested quite spontaneously a mode of allusiveness widely practiced in antiquity.

E. ANIMALS

St. Gregory also illustrates this convention in many references to the animal kingdom. Some of these both in the *Letters* and in the *Contra Eunomium* are, however, of more than passing interest.

1. Birds and Insects

In one of his characteristic, elaborately rhetorical introductions—that of Epistle XXI⁸¹ St. Gregory describes a method of snaring

⁷⁴ Ep. XVII P 54,31 - 55,5. Sometimes wooden pipes were used even in aqueducts. Cf. "Aquaeductus" DS I 340.

⁷⁵ Ep. XVII P 50, 17-21.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* 24-26. Cf. p. 91 *infra*.

⁷⁷ Clay and wax are mentioned also J II 310, 13-14.

⁷⁸ J I 133, 21-26. Asbestos was known to the ancients; cf. Pliny *N.H.* 36, 139 also Arist. *Fr.* 495. For a brief history of its use in antiquity cf. "Asbestos ou Amiantus" DS I 464.

⁷⁹ J I 249, 10-11.

⁸⁰ J I 251, 18. Cf. p. 14 *infra*.

⁸¹ P 70-71, formerly included among the letters of St. Basil. Pasquali's evidence for the authorship of St. Gregory seems conclusive. Cf. P 70, also Prolegomena LIX-LXI; SIFC 99-102; Maas 998.

pigeons by using as a decoy a tame pigeon the wings of which have been anointed with myrrh. When it is sent outside the dove-cote the untamed flock attracted by the ointment will settle near the decoy and may be taken captive.⁸² The question arises as to whether the allusion was an appeal to common practice in his day, or whether it merely reflects a belief maintained quite apart from observation. This cannot be answered with finality.

On the one hand, the belief to which St. Gregory appeals is reflected in both ancient and modern times. From the former there is, for instance, the testimony of the *Geoponica* to the efficacy of using a decoy anointed with myrrh in catching pigeons.⁸³ Other ancient writers have mentioned the use of decoys in snaring pigeons, but without reference to the questionable aid of any sweet-smelling ointment.⁸⁴ The tradition regarding the efficacy of the latter persisted, however, and occasional references to it turn up in writing of both popular⁸⁵ and more serious vein⁸⁶ down to modern times.

There is no question but that decoys can be used successfully in catching pigeons, for they are so used in our own day.⁸⁷ However, the utility of sweet-smelling ointment in the process is doubtful,⁸⁸ especially in the light of investigations of the question since the turn of the present century.⁸⁹ Modern authorities on ornithology are convinced that most birds including the pigeon have not a keen sense of smell; in fact that in birds as compared with mammals olfactory impressions have relatively small importance.⁹⁰

⁸² Ep. XXI P 70, 9-16.

⁸³ *Geoponica* XIV 3, ed. H. Beckh, 407.

⁸⁴ For a fairly complete list of ancient references to pigeons cf. "Pigeon" Thompson *Glossary* 236-247. On the snaring of birds cf. "Venatio" DS V 693 ff.

⁸⁵ Anon. *A Treatise on Domestic Pigeons*, London, 1765, 33.

⁸⁶ Xavier, R. "Le Sens de l'odorat chez les oiseaux," *Revue scientifique*, XII (1899), 144-148.

⁸⁷ Whitman, Charles Otis (Posthumous Works ed. by Oscar Riddle), Vol. III, *The Behavior of Pigeons*, Carnegie Institute of Washington, 1919, 147.

⁸⁸ Hill, A. "Can Birds Smell?" *Nature*, LXXI (1905), 318-319.

⁸⁹ Cf. Rouse, J. E., *The Mental Life of the Domestic Pigeon* (Harvard Psychological Studies II, Boston, 1906), 581-613.

⁹⁰ Budenbrock 241.

Possibly St. Gregory borrowed his illustration from some compendium or was referring to a widely-held popular belief.⁹¹ It could be equally possible, however, since St. Gregory's contemporaries used decoys to capture pigeons that they tintured their wings with the ointment which according to their ideas assisted in the process, but which modern authorities believe to be ineffective. In either case St. Gregory certainly witnesses to a belief of his time in the efficacy of myrrh for such a purpose.

Elsewhere he refers to another method of snaring birds used by his contemporaries, namely the use of bird-lime.⁹²

There is a single casual reference to a turtle-dove.⁹³

An interesting comparison gives a detailed description of the plumage of the peacock.⁹⁴ When one sees the back view of it, one despises it altogether on account of its ugliness and shapelessness according to St. Gregory. But looking at the other side, one sees the variegated painting of nature showing a purple semi-circle, surrounded by golden mist and girt round with glistening, many-hued rainbows. The peacock then as now was admired for its plumage. It is a commonplace to recall how this bird, introduced into Rome only after the beginning of the Christian era, became of prime importance during and after the period of the Empire, since its plumage pleased the eye, and its flesh, the palate of men.⁹⁵ From St. Gregory's reference it is not clear whether his description proceeds from personal observation. Possibly it did, for peacocks though not common were well known in Asia Minor even before St. Gregory's day.⁹⁶

That mimicry of the cry of birds is not merely a modern accomplishment is attested by a reference to the occasion "when someone, imitating the voice of the nightingale with his own voice, persuades our sense of sound to seem to hear the bird."⁹⁷

⁹¹ Pasquali, SIFC 99, dismisses the introduction to Ep. XXI as an aphorism.

⁹² J I 251,18; cf. "Venatio" DS V 694 note 10; Butler 184-191.

⁹³ J II 209,29 - 210,1.

⁹⁴ J II 10, 10-19. Cf. Méridier 144-145, who rightly cites this ecphrasis as an example of St. Gregory's sophistic tendencies.

⁹⁵ Cf. "Cibaria" DS I 1161; Jennison 108. For a list of references to the peacock in writers of antiquity, cf. "τράως" Thompson, *Glossary* 277-281.

⁹⁶ Cf. ESAR 620.

⁹⁷ J II 356, 16-18.

These references to the pigeon, the peacock, and to the nightingale are the only ones in the *Letters* and the *Contra Eunomium* where St. Gregory mentions a particular species of bird by name. In enumerating the signs of spring he speaks of "the return of the birds which winter had driven away."⁹⁸ Their presence and by implication their song were evidently welcome after the dead silence of the cold severe winter usual in Cappadocia. The passage testifies as well to the bare fact of the migration of birds in fourth century Cappadocia. Another letter witnesses to the presence of songbirds in St. Gregory's environment.⁹⁹

St. Gregory again typifies the allusiveness characteristic of fourth century writers in his numerous illustrations referring to insects,¹⁰⁰ allusions too casual and commonplace, however, to reveal anything of the fauna of his times.

2. Fish

There are some interesting references to fish in the *Letters* and in the *Contra Eunomium*. While at Vanota, St. Gregory was shown a fish-pool which was situated on the grounds of the estate and contained remarkably tame fish. It must have been a fairly large pool, for he narrates that a young man, one of the servants employed on the estate,

like some magician showed us a marvel not often met with in nature; for going down into the depths (of the pool), he brought up at will those of the fish that were to his fancy, and they were not averse to the touch of the fisherman but were like submissive puppies, tame and obedient to the hand of the tamer.¹⁰¹

Somehow this is reminiscent of the fish about which Martial wrote, and which were kept in the villa of Domitian at Baii. The master

⁹⁸ Ep. XII P 40, 24-25.

⁹⁹ Ep. X P 37, 12-13. An additional casual reference to birds is found in J I 210, 13-14.

¹⁰⁰ Ant: J II 8,10-11; 89,3; 227,4 - 228,1. Bee: J I 23,3-4; J II 8,10-11; 97,1; 209,29 - 210,1. Beetle: J II 266, 2-4. Flea: 266,15. Gnat: J I 306, 2-10; J II 89,3; 97,1. Spider: 209,29 - 210,1; 317, 11-14. Wasp: 267, 17-18.

¹⁰¹ Ep. XX P 69, 4-9.

had given them names and they used to come when he called them, to take their food from his hand.¹⁰² Other instances of remarkably tame fish are averred by the literature of antiquity¹⁰³ and are not lacking even to-day.¹⁰⁴ In all probability St. Gregory described in his letter what he saw.¹⁰⁵ It may be noted that he takes care to observe that this was not an ordinary occurrence, but "a marvel not often encountered in nature."¹⁰⁶

Besides this pool located on the grounds of the estate at Vanota, there was another, probably somewhat smaller, but also well-stocked with fish. This was triangular in shape, and situated beneath a kind of portico within a building which St. Gregory describes with considerable vagueness.¹⁰⁷ In the pool he witnessed what was for him a fascinating sight. He describes it in detail.

The finest fish as if deliberately making sport of us land creatures kept swimming up from the depths into sight, leaping into the air like winged creatures; for, becoming half visible and tumbling through the air, they sank back again into the depths. Others following one another in line by schools provided a spectacle for those unaccustomed to the sight. It was possible to see in another place another shoal of fish crowded in clusters around a morsel of bread, now pushing, one under another, now leaping upon one another, and again diving under one another.¹⁰⁸

Such fish-pools had become very popular with wealthy Romans from the last years of the Republic on, and a country estate was

¹⁰² Mart. IV, 30.

¹⁰³ Cf. Keller II 339-340 and 361-362.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. e.g. Verill, A. *Strange Fish and Their Stories*, Boston, 1938, 211 ff.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Müller 79-80.

¹⁰⁶ Ep. XX P 69, 5-6.

¹⁰⁷ At least from our distant vantage point it is difficult for us to reconstruct the building, the portico, and the pool, and to reconcile them with what we know of similar contemporaneous architecture. Müller, 75-80, has an intelligent interpretation of the details and presents a plausible reconstruction of the ground-plan of the building. For further discussion of this point see the section on Architecture, p. 27 *infra*. For St. Gregory's correspondent, the owner of the estate at Vanota, the sketchiness of detail would, of course, present no difficulty at all.

¹⁰⁸ Ep. XX P 69, 22-32.

scarcely complete without at least one. The fact that Columella thought it worth while to give advice on how to make ponds for sea-fish¹⁰⁹ implies that ponds of the sort were fairly common on properties near the sea in the first century A. D. Cicero wrote with some bitterness of the leading statesmen of his day who, as he says, thought themselves in heaven if they had bearded mullet in their ponds ready to come and feed out of their hands, and who had care for nothing else.¹¹⁰ With the spread of Roman customs and ideas into the provinces under the Empire, evidently the fad of the fish-ponds could be duplicated to some extent elsewhere than at Rome by the fourth century.¹¹¹ St. Gregory's transports of delight and wonder at what he saw at Vanota, as he records them in Letter XX, do not seem to indicate, however, that he was very familiar with fish-ponds of this type.¹¹²

Twice in the *Contra Eunomium* St. Gregory mentions the sea-lung, emphasizing in both cases the disgusting character of the substance of this fish.¹¹³ He is here referring not to the lung-fish as identified by ichthyologists to-day but rather to the type of mollusk, commonly known as the jelly-fish or Medusa,¹¹⁴ which is a mass of gelatinous matter, and which was popularly known in antiquity as a sea-lung.¹¹⁵ Plato in the *Philebus* refers to it by way of illustration as being sluggish and supine.¹¹⁶ Stallbaum in an interesting comment on this passage of Plato says that πνεύμονος βίον ζῆν became proverbial in antiquity from such references as

¹⁰⁹ Columella VIII 16. Small ornamental fish-ponds like those in Varro's aviary at Casinum were, no doubt, common. Cf. Varro, *R. R.* III 5.

¹¹⁰ Cic. *ad Att.* II, 1, 7.

¹¹¹ On the fish-pools, cf. "Vivarium" DS V 959-962; Jennison 122-123. Cf. Rutilius Namatianus *de Reditu Suo* 11. 376-380.

¹¹² It is possible that he magnified his delight in order to please his correspondent, the owner of Vanota. But cf. Müller, 80-82, with whom I am inclined to agree that St. Gregory's delight and enthusiasm are sincerely expressed and that he really dictated Epistle XX, as he says he did (P 70, 1-6), while at Vanota and still under the influence of its beauty. See also p. 76 *infra*.

¹¹³ J I 310, 19-22; 31-32.

¹¹⁴ Whibley 51.

¹¹⁵ Cf., e.g., Aristotle *De Partibus Animalium* 681a; and Pliny *N. H.* 9, 47, 71 § 154.

¹¹⁶ *Philebus* 21 C.

these.¹¹⁷ Very likely St. Gregory's illustrations employing the sea-lung are influenced by this common notion, and are not a reflection of his own observation.

Possibly an allusion to fish, found in another place, may be derived from first-hand observation. Our author observes, "... even greedy fish flee the bare hook when it draws near them, but when deceived by bait because of a desire for food swallow down the fish-hook."¹¹⁸

3. Other Animals

In the *Contra Eunomium* we find two references to the salamander.¹¹⁹ From these it is clear that St. Gregory has the false idea, prevalent in the literature of classical antiquity, that the salamander could pass through flames unscathed.¹²⁰ He has the notion also that nature forms the salamander from "the chill vapor left in the depth of the firebrands and issuing from them."

There is a single allusion to trained puppies¹²¹ where St. Gregory declares that the tame fish at Vanota were "like submissive puppies, tame and obedient to the hand of the trainer."

In the *Letters* and in the *Contra Eunomium* there are only incidental references to the horse. One might have reasonably looked for more frequent and more significant allusions from an inhabitant of Cappadocia, a country which has always been noted for its horses.¹²² In the paucity of these references St. Gregory presents a decided contrast to St. Basil.¹²³

In several letters our author gives incidental corroboration of the established fact that the horse was used as a means of travel

¹¹⁷ Ed. 1841, p. 150.

¹¹⁸ J II 73, 30 - 74,2. Another allusion to bait and hook is found in 350, 20-21.

¹¹⁹ J I 133, 24-25; J II 186, 11-13.

¹²⁰ On the mistaken ideas of antiquity concerning the salamander cf. Keller II 318-321.

¹²¹ Ep. XX P 69, 8-9.

¹²² Cf. "Kappadokia" PW X 1911. A complete list of St. Gregory's references to the horse in the *Contra Eunomium* follows: J I 29, 17-19; 45, 13-15; 150,25; J II 160 *passim*. The references to the horse in the *Letters* will be found in note 124 *infra*.

¹²³ Cf. Fox 11, 17, 31, 55, 95, 131. But possibly in a study embracing all St. Gregory's works this conclusion would be considerably altered.

in the Cappadocia of his day and its environs, both in drawing a vehicle and in carrying a rider.¹²⁴

Other casual references to animals¹²⁵ simply are a manifestation of the allusiveness dear to writers of St. Gregory's day, but of themselves are not informative as to the animal life of the fourth century.

F. PROFESSIONS AND CRAFTS

1. Craftsmen and Their Handiwork

According to St. Gregory particular trades or skills were learned in his day from a master by an apprentice;¹²⁶ for example, the trade of smith, of weaver, of rhetor, or of geometrician. Further, reacting apparently to a tendency to the contrary, he feels it necessary to insist upon the right of the specialist to stick to his specialty.¹²⁷

He attests that the smith makes by means of tong and hammer¹²⁸ almost all the devices that are made of iron.¹²⁹ He mentions the hammer as the chief instrument of the smith's trade, and says explicitly that all other tools owe their origin to the hammer. But he admits that he is not at all sure how the first hammers were made; δι' ἑτέρου τινος ὀργάνου are his words.¹³⁰

¹²⁴ Ep. I P 3, 5-19; Ep. II P 13, 5-9 and 15, 9-11; Ep. VI P 32-33 *passim*.

¹²⁵ Ass: J II 190, 13-14. Bull: 50, 7. Camel: J I 149, 19-20; J II 190, 13-14. Dog: J I 149, 19-20; J II 84, 12; 166, 11-12; 266, 15, 18, 21. Eel: 50, 20-21. Elephant: J I 149, 19-20. Frog: 306, 2-10; J II 84, 12; 166, 11-12; 266,2 - 4, 12. Lamb: 84, 12. Leopard: J I 149, 19-20. Mouse: 149, 19-20. Ox: 150, 25; J II 190, 13-14. Serpent: J I 168, 24-26; J II 266, 15; Ep. III P 19, 20-23; Ep. XXX P 87, 20-22. On the history of the role of the serpent in the life and literature of ancient times and as a symbol of evil after the advent of Christianity cf. "Draco" DS II 403-414. Worm: J II 266, 2-4. Animals which feed by night and are therefore blind to the light: J I 220, 7-8.

¹²⁶ Ep. XVII P 54, 18-23.

¹²⁷ J I 26, 21-23.

¹²⁸ J II 58, 9-14.

¹²⁹ The word χαλκεύς means workers both in bronze and in iron. In almost every town of Asia Minor there was a smith or two whose trade was to make objects in ordinary use, such as pots, kettles, etc. Cf ESAR 826.

¹³⁰ J II 86, 15-20.

He identifies as the products of the smith's work in his day useful articles, such as a shovel,¹³¹ or a gimlet,¹³² and both curved and straight tools.¹³³ Coals, bellows, and an anvil were then important accessories to the trade of smith.¹³⁴ St. Gregory also declares that when one wishes to have utensils made he entrusts the iron, not to unskilled workers, but to those who are well instructed in the smith's trade.¹³⁵ Besides manufacturing new articles the smith is also engaged, he tells us, in mending the corroded parts of copper vessels, in stopping up little holes, in softening tin by hammering it, and in fastening with lead the legs of cauldrons.¹³⁶

The trade of smith in fourth century Cappadocia was not highly esteemed at least by people of whom St. Gregory is typical and the audience whom he was addressing. Furthermore it was not remunerative. St. Gregory calls it "that scorching and vulgar trade," and scornfully pictures Aëtius sitting near his small hammer and little anvil under a tent made of hair "scantily and laboriously" procuring the necessities of life.¹³⁷ That the smith was actually capable of doing clever metal work nevertheless is shown by the trick by which Aëtius is said to have taken advantage of one of his customers.¹³⁸ A woman gave him a broken trinket of gold to mend. Aëtius "filched away the golden trinket, giving to her in its

¹³¹ J I 151, 7-12.

¹³² J I 143, 7-11.

¹³³ J II 353, 5.

¹³⁴ J I 151, 7-12.

¹³⁵ Ep. XVII P 54, 4-6.

¹³⁶ J I 33, 11-15.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 7-15.

¹³⁸ St. Gregory alleges as a source for his information about Aëtius, Athanasius, Bishop of Ancyra (J I 32, 23-25) a man whose veracity, he says, cannot be questioned. Jaeger, I 33, feels that the story of the filched trinket, however, is not to be taken literally but as an allegory. St. Gregory who seems to be our only source for it gives no hint of allegory, but presents it as one fact about the life of Aëtius. Philostorgius III (PG LXV 501 ff.) bears witness to the great skill of Aëtius in working gold, but does not mention this incident. At any rate, whether the tale be true of Aëtius or not is not important to us here. The fact that St. Gregory mentions such skill in the use of metals in a way which makes it seem that his readers knew it as a commonplace, implies a high degree of skill possessed by an ordinary smith in a country town of fourth century Cappadocia.

place a copper one of equal size with the gold one and like it in appearance, since he had smeared the copper with gold by dipping the surface," using, it seems, a method of gilding then well-known.¹³⁹ The trick was discovered after a time, it is true, and the thief tried and punished, but it must have taken no mean quality of workmanship to make it succeed at all.

Other allusions attest that in St. Gregory's day weaving of garments was carried on with thread, shuttles, a weaver's comb, and other apparatus.¹⁴⁰ Shoemakers carefully cut the leather for shoes into patterns with special tools.¹⁴¹

Carving was an important occupation of the farmer during the winter, and the chief product of this work was letters of the alphabet for the use of children.¹⁴² Carpenters made benches among other things,¹⁴³ and used a rule or plumb-line to ensure straight lines in their work.¹⁴⁴ There is a casual but explicit reference to works normally carried on by hand labor in the fourth century, such as tailoring, construction of buildings, mining, well-digging, agriculture.¹⁴⁵

2. Agriculture

The farmer's life as pictured by St. Gregory is toilsome, but the work has its compensations. The soil is "sweet" to the farmer.¹⁴⁶ To farmers "the enjoyment of that which has been won by toil gives great incentive to the toil which follows."¹⁴⁷ Skilled agriculture produced what impressed the saint as remarkable results.¹⁴⁸ Eunomius' father was a farmer bent over the plow and hoe, and expending much toil over his little plot of land.¹⁴⁹ His farm was

¹³⁹ J I 33, 15 - 34, 1. Cf. "Gilding," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th ed., XII 13.

¹⁴⁰ J I 151, 15-18. On the prevalence of weaving as a trade in Asia Minor cf. ESAR 817-822.

¹⁴¹ J I 93, 6-14; cf. Ménard III 293-294.

¹⁴² J I 36, 18-22.

¹⁴³ J I 151, 18-19.

¹⁴⁴ Ep. II P 11, 7-9; J I 124, 21; J II 76, 26-28; 93, 24; 324, 15. Cf. Ménard III 282.

¹⁴⁵ J I 134, 30 - 135, 6.

¹⁴⁶ Ep. X P 37, 14-15.

¹⁴⁷ Ep. XIV P 45, 5-8.

¹⁴⁸ Ep. XX P 68, 23-24.

¹⁴⁹ J I 36, 17-22.

apparently not very fruitful, however, for during the winter when he had respite from the labors of the soil, he barely eked out a living by carving out the letters of the alphabet which were used in instructing little children.¹⁵⁰ The farmer employed the wind to separate the wheat from the chaff, and was at a loss how to perform this operation in a calm.¹⁵¹ He used to break up clods by means of a mattock.¹⁵² The plow is casually referred to as a tool of agriculture.¹⁵³ By way of comparison mention is made of the mill which from early times formed part of the equipment of a farm. "They who run around the mill with eyes blind-folded, during the long journey remain in the same place," observes St. Gregory.¹⁵⁴ He also alludes casually to the vine-dresser.¹⁵⁵

3. Sea-faring

The only reference to sea-faring of any value to this study is that where St. Gregory places emphasis on the need of thorough training for a pilot. He tells us, "A man does not become the helmsman of a ship unless he be well instructed in skilful steering."¹⁵⁶ Here again appears the emphasis we have noted elsewhere on the idea of the necessity of thorough training for efficient workers.¹⁵⁷ St. Gregory makes four other casual allusions to sea-faring.¹⁵⁸

4. Medicine and Allied Professions

With regard to the professions there was a contrast between the condition of things in Asia Minor and that which persisted in

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.* Cf. p. 97 *infra*.

¹⁵¹ J I 26, 12-13. This method of winnowing grain was still used in this region when Ramsay visited there. Cf. (2) 273.

¹⁵² J I 135, 5-6.

¹⁵³ Note 149 *supra* and J II 86,29 - 87,2. On the tools of the workmen of the various crafts and trades cf. "Outils et Outillages" DACL XI 162 ff.

¹⁵⁴ J I 190, 22-25. Another reference: 31, 18-19.

¹⁵⁵ J II 32, 27 - 33,1. Additional casual references to agriculture as a profession: J I 261, 16-17; 265, 16-22; 356, 15.

¹⁵⁶ Ep. XVII P 53, 22-23.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. p. 20 *supra*; pp. 26 and 31 *infra*.

¹⁵⁸ Ep. I P 9, 3-4; J I 267, 7-10; 265, 16-22; 261, 16-17.

Rome in St. Gregory's day. Professional men in Asia Minor, such as architects and physicians, were held in esteem and often rose to wealth and political prominence through their professions. In Rome professional men except lawyers had been traditionally foreigners or freedmen and this fact attached a certain stigma to these professions.¹⁵⁹ In Asia Minor there were reputable and even distinguished schools of medicine and the profession was held in honor. A contributing cause to this was that it was a duty of the public physicians to impart instruction.¹⁶⁰

Not only those who formally belonged to the medical profession, but nearly all well educated men were expected to know something of the theoretical side of medicine. In this respect St. Gregory was no exception to the other learned men of his time and possessed some knowledge of the sciences of medicine and physiology.¹⁶¹ This phase will be treated more fully in the section on intellectual life.¹⁶² Here we are concerned merely with direct references to the medical profession as such, especially in its economic aspect.

Though physicians in good repute, as mentioned above, were esteemed there were also certain individuals pretending to practice medicine who were but charlatans,¹⁶³ and who were the bane of the medical profession. St. Gregory tells how Aëtius, after the detection of his trick whereby he stole a golden trinket from a customer,¹⁶⁴ deserted the trade of smith and became just such a quack physician. He first apprenticed himself to a quack in order to learn the trade.¹⁶⁵ In this guise he frequented the more obscure houses and the outcasts of society.¹⁶⁶ Soon a sense of his own talents and

¹⁵⁹ Cf. ESAR 849 ff. Friedländer I 156; "Médecus" DS III 1671.

¹⁶⁰ ESAR 851-852.

¹⁶¹ Cf. Fox 15.

¹⁶² Cf. pp. 137 ff. *infra*.

¹⁶³ On the subject of ancient medicine cf. "Médecins" DACL XI 112-158. On charlatans cf. *ibid.* 111; also Friedländer I 167-185 and MM XV 436-454.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. p. 20 *supra*.

¹⁶⁵ J I 34, 11-15. Physicians commonly had a group of apprentices under their tutelage, though the nature and length of the instructions are not well known. Cf. "Médecus" DS III 1673-1675.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. Plato *Leg.* IV 720 A. Jaeger's note s.v. ἀγυρτευόντων calls attention to an interesting semantic change in this connection. Byzantine writers regularly use περιόδευειν in the sense "cure, by regular visits" for θεραπεύειν in speaking of physicians; cf. LS, s.v. Such pseudo-physicians as Aëtius probably influenced this change.

importance precluded further subservience to a master. He wished besides to share in the wealth which some physicians were reputed to have gained.¹⁶⁷ Therefore, he persuaded a certain Armenian, "who was easy to deceive because of being a foreigner," to have him as his physician at a generous fee. Henceforth Aëtius "considered it below him to serve for hire to other men in his profession, and thought himself worthy both actually to be and to be called a physician." Evidently no formal certification was then required for a man to be accepted by the public as a physician.¹⁶⁸

After the Peace of Constantine the number of free practitioners increased. These, since they were pupils of different schools, contradicted one another energetically, sometimes prescribing remedies diametrically opposed to one another often with disconcerting results.¹⁶⁹ Aëtius in his new-found profession took active part in the medical meetings of the day as "one of the shouters," St. Gregory tells us. When the argument had reached its crucial point, "he was sought for in no small way by those who would buy off this brazen voice for their own side of the argument."¹⁷⁰

St. Gregory hints at friendly converse on his part with medical men in his account of the tale a physician had recounted to him of a man who was cured of a disease by hearing good news. "He who told me did not add an explanation of the cause (of the cure)," our author goes on to say.¹⁷¹

St. Gregory in but one instance refers to Christ as the physician of the soul, a concept which appears frequently in ecclesiastical writings of all times.¹⁷² In one of his letters he calls Him "the Physician of our whole life."¹⁷³ There is no allusion of this kind in the *Contra Eunomium*. Because of the nature of these works, however, no special significance attaches to the rarity of St. Gregory's references to Christ the Physician.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. "Médecins" DACL XI 114.

¹⁶⁸ J I 34, 15-20. This is substantiated by other sources. Cf. Neuburger II 6-16.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. "Médecins" DACL XI 145.

¹⁷⁰ J I 34, 20-25. Cf. "Médecus" DS III 1684.

¹⁷¹ Ep. XIII P 42, 6-7 and 16.

¹⁷² Cf. "Médecins" DACL XI 158.

¹⁷³ Ep. III P 23, 19-21.

The physician was not the only professional man who had a considerable knowledge of anatomy in the fourth century. The trainer, *παιδοτρίβης* had knowledge sufficient both to dislocate a sound limb or to set a dislocated one in a scientific manner, St. Gregory tells us.¹⁷⁴ However, from the time of Aristotle the methods of scientific gymnastics, founded on anatomy, belong properly not to the *παιδοτρίβης* but rather to the gymnast who was specially charged with the education of professional athletes.¹⁷⁵

5. Architecture and Sculpture

The profession of architect like that of physician was highly esteemed in Asia Minor. In the cities there were very probably public architects permanently in the service of the communities. The architect gave an estimate of the cost of a public work, and assigned his property to a magistrate as security until the completion of the work.¹⁷⁶ Possibly Amphilochius,¹⁷⁷ the correspondent to whom Letter XXV is addressed, sought the advice of some such person in obtaining the estimate which St. Gregory asked him to send, concerning the approximate number of workmen required for the erection of a shrine¹⁷⁸ in the construction of which the saint was interested.¹⁷⁹

This letter, despite its tantalizingly uneven details describing the shrine, is an important source for the history of Christian art.¹⁸⁰ The shrine is to be cruciform in keeping with the common type of

¹⁷⁴ J I 267, 12-14. A retired *παιδοτρίβης* could easily become a physician. Cf. "Médecus" DS III 1677-1688.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. "Paidotribes" DS IV 277-278.

¹⁷⁶ Cf. ESAR 850 ff.

¹⁷⁷ Amphilochius, a former lawyer and orator of Constantinople, spiritual son of St. Basil, and Bishop of Iconium at the time when Letter XXV was written. "Amphiloque" DTC I 1121-1123; DHGE II 1346-1348. "Amphilochius" PW I 1937. Holl *passim*.

¹⁷⁸ On the word *μαρτώριον* regularly used of a martyr's shrine cf. Strzygowski (2) 96 ff.

¹⁷⁹ Ep. XXV P 78, 18-21.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. Strzygowski (1) 71. Letter XXV contains *passim* many technical terms of church architecture certainly significant for the student of Christian architecture.

church architecture of the time, St. Gregory explicitly states.¹⁸¹ The material of which the building is to be constructed is firebaked brick and whatever stones may be found in the immediate vicinity.¹⁸² The roof is to be of masonry rather than of timber or of dressed stone, materials which were evidently used more commonly than masonry in roofing such a building. He explains that he cannot use timber, for it is very scarce in that region. He cannot use dressed stone, for his budget of expenses will not allow the extra outlay which will be involved if the workmen have to spend time dressing the stones.¹⁸³

In speaking of the various parts of the building St. Gregory insists strongly and repeatedly on the necessity for the workmen to be skilled. He says he understands that self-sustained vaulting is firmer than that which rests on supports, so he wishes some of the workmen to be skilled at making the former type.¹⁸⁴ Pillars, tori, and capitals are to be carved in the Corinthian style by skilled sculptors.¹⁸⁵ The entrance is to be of various kinds of marble, worked with suitable ornament. Above will be panels adorned along the projection of the coping with such designs as are customary.¹⁸⁶ St. Gregory is not specific about the shape of these designs and ornamentations, for he feels it is an understood thing that, while he supplies the materials for the shrine, the artistic talent of the workers will supply the details.¹⁸⁷

Though St. Gregory apparently expected Amphilochius to make an accurate estimate of the whole undertaking from the information which he supplied,¹⁸⁸ he is not specific about certain items which it appears that Amphilochius would have needed to know.

¹⁸¹ Ep. XXV P 77, 5-8. Cf. Strzykowski (1) 71-90; (3) 71-72.

¹⁸² Ep. XXV P 79, 4-6.

¹⁸³ P 78,25 - 79,1. On the influence on architecture of geographical factors, such as the scarcity of timber, cf. Strzykowski (3) 7-10 and 40.

¹⁸⁴ Ep. XXV P 78, 21-25.

¹⁸⁵ P 79, 11-15 and 20-22. Various kinds of stone-work seem to have been common in the building industry in fourth century Cappadocia. In the *Contra Eunomium* St. Gregory also makes casual allusion to potters and brick-makers who use molds. Cf. J I 228, 20-23.

¹⁸⁶ Ep. XXV P 79, 15-18.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.* 18-20.

¹⁸⁸ P 76,24 - 77,4.

St. Gregory gives some measurements and a general plan, but says nothing of underpinnings, of the location of the entrance, or of the number and exact place of the windows, etc. Possibly previous letters (non-extant) supplied further information. Then too this type of chapel was very common and Amphilochius could read between the lines many things lost to us.¹⁸⁹

Letter XX which describes the estate at Vanota is addressed, unfortunately for our curiosity, to the owner of the estate. Consequently many details which we should like to know are omitted by St. Gregory. There are nonetheless some interesting references to architecture, although he refers to the main group of buildings on the estate in very vague terms.¹⁹⁰ At the left as he entered the grounds he saw an unfinished martyr's shrine which although still roofless yet "shone with beauty."¹⁹¹ He describes in more detail the triangular portico and adjoining dining room to which he was conducted last of all in his tour of the estate. Like his description of the shrine in Letter XXV this account is detailed enough in some points to whet our desire to know more where it is maddeningly reticent.

Several things are quite clear. St. Gregory says that this place, to which he was led in order to rest, consists of two parts: first, a lofty triangular portico raised up over a deep pool, also triangular in shape and containing a goodly number of fish; and second, just beyond the portico and pool, a dining room. The latter was full of sunlight and ornamented with variegated designs which made it very attractive—almost as attractive as the fish-pool—to the de-

¹⁸⁹ For attempted reconstructions of the shrine on the basis of Epistle XXV cf. Friedenthal *passim*; Strzykowski (1) 74 and 76. For a select bibliography on Ep. XXV, cf. P 76, note on l. 14. The fact that experienced scholars differ widely on the interpretation of details of the shrine is eloquent testimony to the vagueness of Letter XXV. Pasquali, SIFC 128, regards them as too exacting in objecting to the paucity of detail. Keil, he says, seems to forget that Gregory was a bishop and not a technician. He was explaining a plan for a church, not describing a building already in place. For a similar opinion see Delahaye (2) 405.

¹⁹⁰ P 68, 2-6 and 67, 27-28.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 28 - 68,2.

lighted guest.¹⁹² How the sunlight was admitted he does not tell us.

One of the questions which arise is that of the exact nature of the building. Were the portico and dining-room part of a larger building, or did they form a complete little building of themselves? St. Gregory speaks of the whole as *τινα οἶκον* and says that the entrance (or approach?) seemed to indicate that he was entering a dwelling. Once inside he found himself, to his manifest astonishment, in the portico with its fascinating fish-pool.¹⁹³ Immediately beyond this and within clear view was the high-ceilinged dining-room where St. Gregory was treated to a delightful repast.¹⁹⁴ There is no mention of furnishings though it is plain that there must have been some. The location of the windows (if any) and door, or doors, is likewise a matter for conjecture, as also the shape of the roof and the relative dimensions of each part of the building.¹⁹⁵

Perhaps the most interesting architectural item mentioned in Letter XX is the definite allusion to the triangular shape of the portico and pool, decidedly a novelty in Greek and Roman architecture as we know it.¹⁹⁶

In Letter XVII is an incidental reference to an aqueduct which is somewhat vaguely described as a series of columns holding up the roof.¹⁹⁷ Architects of houses or of ships are mentioned for the sake of illustration.¹⁹⁸

6. Painting

We learn something of the contemporary portrait painter from one of St. Gregory's illustrations. He mentions the kind of artist

¹⁹² P 69, 9-22. The decorations probably were paintings but the text is not specific.

¹⁹³ P 69, 10-12. Müller, 75-76, feels the evidence is conclusive for considering the portico and dining-room a part of a larger building.

¹⁹⁴ P 69, 32-35.

¹⁹⁵ Only the vaguest references to dimensions occur, such as "deep," "lofty," etc.

¹⁹⁶ For a select bibliography and a good discussion of this point which by implication throws some light on the type of architecture of the building, see Müller 76-78.

¹⁹⁷ P 54,33 - 55,1.

¹⁹⁸ J I 142, 8-9; 280.

who, in depicting on his painting-board the portraits of his somewhat ugly friends, tickles their vanity by making a flattering portrait instead of a true likeness.¹⁹⁹

7. Stenography and Scribes

It is a commonplace that the use of stenographers and of shorthand writing dates back to antiquity. A true system of tachygraphy was known and taught in Roman schools as early as Cicero's time. Systems of stenography go back to the third century B. C. or earlier.²⁰⁰ St. Gregory tells us that Eunomius was at one time a student of shorthand writing. During his student days he lived with one of his relatives, "receiving his board as pay for his services in writing." At this time he also acted as teacher of the children of the household.²⁰¹

In the fourth century men of high standing generally had at least one secretary and sometimes several.²⁰² It does not seem, however, that St. Gregory had a secretary or secretaries in his employ constantly. It is true that he says explicitly that Letter XX, telling of the beauties of Vanota, was dictated to a scribe. But Letter VI was apparently written by St. Gregory himself.²⁰³ And in Letter XV he gives as the cause of the late appearance of the *Contra Eunomium* the fact that there was a scarcity of secretaries and no copyist available. He hopes that people will not suspect him of desultoriness because of the delay. Now that he has found a scribe who will also act as proof-reader, the first draft is ready.²⁰⁴ It was evidently not expected that the author himself make the

¹⁹⁹ Ep. XIX P 59,22 - 60,2 and 60, 16-17. There are several other casual allusions to the profession of painter: Ep. XX P 68, 23-24; J I 267, 10-12; J II 210, 4-6.

²⁰⁰ On the shorthand writing of the Greeks, cf. Gardthausen 210 ff. Deferrari (2) 107.

²⁰¹ J I 36,25 - 37,5. Two additional casual references to shorthand occur: J I 366, 8-14; J II 212, 14-17.

²⁰² Cf. Fox 89; Pando 26; Keenan 29-33; "Scriptura" DS IV 1134-1135.

²⁰³ Ep. XX P 70, 1-3; Ep. VI P 34, 2-3.

²⁰⁴ Ep. XV P 46, 15-23. "We Cappadocians are poor in nearly everything that makes its owner happy, and especially are we poor in those who can write."

copy even under these circumstances. He was justified in waiting until he could find a secretary.

8. Miscellaneous Occupations

The reader is referred to the section on intellectual life for St. Gregory's references to the profession of sophist in the works under consideration.²⁰⁵

An illustration refers to the overseer of an aqueduct, a post very important in the late Empire.²⁰⁶

Bath attendants and their utensils, e.g. foot-pans, towels, and depilatories are also mentioned by way of illustration.²⁰⁷

Casual reference is similarly made to the clever mixer of drugs who concocts a mixture of honey and poison more palatable for his victim than the simple poison,²⁰⁸ to honey-boilers who make honey-cakes²⁰⁹ and to fowlers.²¹⁰

G. LABOR AND WAGES

Where St. Gregory mentions professions and crafts in the *Letters* and the *Contra Eunomium*, he sometimes gives incidental information about conditions of labor and about wages. What we learn from him corroborates, in general, the knowledge we have obtained from coins and inscriptions which, of course, are our chief source of information about labor and wages in fourth century Asia Minor.²¹¹ In some cases his references throw additional light on obscure points.

Letter XXV²¹² is especially rich in this respect. As mentioned above,²¹³ St. Gregory wrote this letter in connection with a martyr's

²⁰⁵ Cf. pp. 99 ff. *infra*.

²⁰⁶ Ep. XVII P 50, 24-26. Cf. p. 91 *infra*.

²⁰⁷ J I 330, 25-31.

²⁰⁸ J I 232, 4-9. The allusion to the use of honey to make substances more palatable may, however, be merely a commonplace. Cf. chap. III note 255 *infra*.

²⁰⁹ Ep. XXVII P 82,6.

²¹⁰ P 70, 9-16.

²¹¹ Cf. ESAR 837.

²¹² P 76-80.

²¹³ Pp. 25 ff. *supra*.

shrine which he wished to have constructed. He requests his correspondent, Amphilochius of Iconium, to procure workmen for him from Iconium because, as he says, he feels that workmen from that region are more skilled than those of Cappadocia²¹⁴ and also more amenable about wages. The artisans of Cappadocia are too much inclined to take unfair advantage of him in the latter respect.²¹⁵

In building the usual procedure at this period was that the amount of the wage to be paid to the workmen and the type and quality of work they were expected to do, be stipulated by a formal contract. Sometimes a group of artisans was represented by one of their number, while at other times the workingmen's organization dealt with the other party to the contract through an intermediary.²¹⁶ In his first unsuccessful negotiations with the workmen of Cappadocia the Bishop of Nyssa appears to have used the first method, but the artisans held out for too much pay, he states.²¹⁷ If they could have agreed to his terms, he seems to have been willing to employ them, despite their admitted inferiority in workmanship compared with the Isaurians. In the end, rather than accede to what he considered excessively high demands, he made his appeal to the Bishop of Iconium to act as intermediary for him with the workmen of Iconium. In order that Amphilochius may know just how many and what types of workmen to send, St. Gregory gives a somewhat sketchy description of the projected building. From these details²¹⁸ the Bishop of Iconium was to make such an accurate estimate of the undertaking that he would send neither too few nor too many workmen.²¹⁹ St. Gregory himself would see to the supplying of materials for the shrine. It seems to have been the normal way of doing things at that time for the person interested in having a building constructed to arrange separately for the workmen and the materials.²²⁰

²¹⁴ Cf. Holl, *Hermes* XLII (1908) 242^a, for a list of witnesses to the superiority of the Isaurians in the art of building.

²¹⁵ P 79, 8-11.

²¹⁶ Cf. Buckler 27-50; ESAR 848-849; "Collegium" PW IV 380-480.

²¹⁷ P 79, 1-11.

²¹⁸ Cf. pp. 25 ff. *supra*.

²¹⁹ P 76,24 - 77,4; and 78, 12-21.

²²⁰ Cf. ESAR 837.

Wages for the masonry, sculpturing, and various kinds of stone work were evidently to be paid by the day rather than by the job. St. Gregory urges that "if possible, a well-defined amount of work be imposed per day" in order that, after passing the time in idleness, the workman may not demand pay on the ground that he has worked a certain number of days even though he has no work to show for it.²²¹ Again, one of the considerations urging St. Gregory to use clay bricks in the building instead of dressed stone is "so that there may be no necessity for them (i.e. the workmen) to spend time fitting the faces of the stones to one another."²²² His worry about the time element implies once more that the pay was given by the day.²²³

An idea of the amount of the wages and also of the low standard of living then prevailing is given by St. Gregory's indignant protest that some men in Cappadocia were trying to make a contract with him "for thirty workmen for a gold-piece²²⁴ for the dressed-stone work." Just what time was covered by this pay he does not say, but adds that "the usual meals are included with the gold-piece."²²⁵ In this case at least the employer was expected to furnish some, or perhaps all, the meals of his workmen. The use of the word *τετυπωμένης* seems to imply that this was no isolated instance of such furnishing of food.²²⁶

St. Gregory alleges his poverty as a reason for quibbling about the question of wages, and hopes the workmen will have "a good feeling" about what he agrees to pay them.²²⁷ However, he implies that such precision as he displays about the terms of the contract is not the acceptable thing in contemporaneous society when he says, "I know that I shall seem penurious to many because I am

²²¹ P 79, 26-30.

²²² *Ibid.*, 5-8.

²²³ This assumption is supported also by the evidence in Diocletian's edict. Cf. ESAR V 338.

²²⁴ Probably the "solidus," a gold coin established by Constantine c. 312, and worth about three dollars. Cf. Cagnat et Chapot II 274.

²²⁵ P 79, 1-4.

²²⁶ Diocletian's edict bears this out. Cf. Abbot 170-174; "Edictum Diocletiani" PW V 1948-1957; ESAR V 338.

²²⁷ P 80, 7-11.

minutely inquiring about the contracts."²²⁸ Poverty is his excuse. He ends by begging Amphilochius, when once he has completed the contract, to assure the men of the "good feeling" of their employer toward them and to pledge them full payment of the wages.²²⁹

There are a few references attesting the wages accruing to various other occupations. When Eunomius first began to operate as a shorthand writer, he received his board as pay for his services in writing.²³⁰ Eunomius' father was a farmer whose way of life was "honest and respectable," St. Gregory tells us, "but toilsome because of poverty and full of numberless labors." During the winter he procured the bare necessities of life by the pay he earned in carving out the wooden letters of the alphabet used in the instruction of children.²³¹ Whatever he earned from his labors on the soil during the growing season was evidently not enough to tide him over the winter. The smith too earned scanty wages. "What pay worth mentioning could accrue to one who mends the corroded parts of copper vessels, etc.?" asks St. Gregory.²³²

On one occasion our author took part in a lumber transaction. A sophist, Stagirius,²³³ in a playful letter²³⁴ requests a large amount of lumber, and suggests that the Bishop give an order to the presbyter of Osiana for it. St. Gregory in his reply²³⁵ continues the playful tone of the sophist's letter and agrees to see that he receives three hundred beams, presumably through the aforementioned presbyter.²³⁶ Since the sophist says that he will be obliged to spend the winter in the open unless St. Gregory sends the beams, it would appear that he is poor, although sophists at that

²²⁸ P 79,30 - 80,1.

²²⁹ Labor disputes because of poor wages or failure to fulfill the terms of contracts are attested by inscriptions. Cf. Buckler 31-45 esp. 45. Asia Minor is the country where we hear of the nearest parallel to modern organized strikes. Cf. Rostovtzeff (2) 168-169.

²³⁰ J I 37, 1-3.

²³¹ J I 36, 14-22.

²³² J I 33, 11-15.

²³³ Cf. note 51 *supra*.

²³⁴ Ep. XXVI P 80-81.

²³⁵ Ep. XXVII P 81-82.

²³⁶ Cf. pp. 8 ff. *supra*.

time frequently received generous remuneration for their services.²³⁷ Possibly in view of the obviously playful tone of the letter, we need not interpret too literally his statement about spending the winter in the open. Even so, the patent fact remains that he was not financially able to obtain the beams and had to write a begging letter to secure them.

Whether the transaction involved a loan, or a gift, or a sale, of lumber is hard to determine from the available evidence. Maas suggests that an understanding of the price was arrived at through the bearer of the letter, possibly "Dios" the presbyter.²³⁸ This is merely a conjecture, however. The end of Letter XXVII which states that as many rafters will be furnished to Stagirus as "it is convenient for the person asked to furnish, and for the person receiving to pay back" does imply a price, but the whole transaction is so hazy and so shrouded in rhetorical wrappings that one cannot be more definite.

H. POVERTY AND WEALTH

St. Gregory testifies to the poverty of the Cappadocians in his time. They are poor, he says, in almost all the things "which make their possessors happy."²³⁹ The criteria of a man's wealth in his day, the saint tells us, were the kind of house he had, his slaves, and the luxury he enjoyed, a luxury supported by wealth based on a regular income.²⁴⁰

He attests that the profession of physician was sometimes a source of great wealth,²⁴¹ whereas the farmer's life was one of toil and poverty.²⁴²

²³⁷ Cf. ESAR 853 ff. On the friendly relations existing between some bishops and sophists in the fourth century cf. pp. 100-101 *infra*.

²³⁸ Maas 995. Cf. note 55 *supra*.

²³⁹ Ep. XV P 46, 14-16. On the general backwardness of Cappadocia cf. ESAR 797 and 815.

²⁴⁰ Ep. XVII P 52, 22-23.

²⁴¹ J 34, 15-20.

²⁴² J I 36, 14-18. On the poverty of the small farmer and his oppression by the rich in the fourth century cf. Heitland 423-426.

In the *Contra Eunomium* St. Gregory twice refers to the extreme poverty of beggars by way of illustration. They collect their food, he tells us, from various and manifold sources receiving a little here, a little there. Because of the difficulty of obtaining clothing they are forced "to sew up tunics for themselves of rags, stitching them together."²⁴³

²⁴³ J I 252, 1-3; 329, 26-32.

CHAPTER II

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

In accepting the testimony of a fourth century bishop as to the social and political life of his times, we must keep in mind that he is not an indifferent reporter of the contemporary scene but a writer whose words are conditioned by a personal responsibility to correct as best he can abuses with which he is confronted. The tendency of St. Gregory to indulge in rhetoric¹ and in sarcasm and in actual querulousness must put us particularly on our guard. He has much to tell us, however, of social life and has made some interesting observations on political life, so his references cannot be systematically rejected as mere *topoi*.² We must also keep in mind that the present inquiry is confined to the *Contra Eunomium* and the *Letters*. Doubtless some of the findings given here will be subject to correction when all his works have been investigated. Meanwhile there is sufficient material of a value all its own to make it worth-while to present a chapter on what the *Letters* and the *Contra Eunomium* tell us of fourth century social and political life.

A. WOMEN

In Asia Minor women enjoyed a privileged position compared to their status in other eastern provinces of the Roman world during the first centuries of our era. They took a more prominent part in public life.³ The few allusions to women in the *Letters* and the

¹ Cf. Méridier *passim*; Stein *Encomium* XCV - XCVI.

² Referring to the immediate environs of Sebastea (Modern Sivas) Cumont, p. 222, has the following to say of the value of St. Gregory's *Or. in XL Mart.* and *Or. II* as sources of historical information: "On peut se représenter à l'aide des descriptions de saint Grégoire de Nysse, gâtées par une rhétorique précieuse mais pleines de détails vécus, l'aspect qu'offraient autrefois ces compagnes."

³ On the attitude of both pagan and Christian antiquity to woman, and on her place in ancient society cf. "Femme" DACL V 1300-1353; Ramsay (1) 267-271.

Contra Eunomium,⁴ though tacitly corroborating this statement, do not add materially to what we know from other sources.

From such a reference in Letter II it is clear that women in St. Gregory's day sometimes undertook long journeys and when so doing commonly travelled on horseback, and he gives a graphic account of the inconveniences and risks incumbent upon such travel. The letter is intended, it is true, to discourage the making of pilgrimages to the Holy Land by fourth century ascetics, but what our author says of the external difficulties of travel for consecrated women holds good for all their sex. He tells us that women ran great moral risks during journeys and that it was imperative, moreover, for a woman while travelling to be accompanied by a man—either a friend or a paid guide—to perform such offices as assisting her to mount upon and dismount from her horse. Conditions in inns and other stopping-places were such that the fact of being thus accompanied in itself sometimes offended propriety, he declares.⁵

Letter XIX gives a brief résumé of the death and way of life of St. Gregory's best-loved sister, St. Macrina.⁶ "I had a sister," he tells us, "a teacher of life, my mother after the death of my mother, who was so near to God as to be to me a 'tower of strength' and a 'shield of good will.'"⁷ Her life presents a picture of pure womanhood which, because of her consecration to the religious state, is treated in the section of this study devoted to that phase of Christian life.⁸

Epistle III⁹ is addressed to three women whose character and way of life seem to have been similar to those of St. Macrina. They were Eustathia, Ambrosia, and Basilissa,¹⁰ of whom the first

⁴ For references to women which have significance because of the light they shed upon the attitude of St. Gregory's contemporaries toward womankind the reader is referred to p. 69 *infra*.

⁵ Ep. II P 13, 3-21. Cf. section on Travel *infra* esp. pp. 47-48.

⁶ P 59-66. For a more detailed account cf. esp. Greg. Nys. *Vita Macrinae* PG XLVI 959-1000. Also Acta SS (3) 589-604 (Jul. 19); Tillemont IX 7-8, 570-572, etc.; "Makrina" LTK VI 819.

⁷ Ep. XIX P 62, 7-10.

⁸ Cf. p. 176 *infra*.

⁹ P 17-25.

¹⁰ Greg. Naz. *Ep.* 244 is also addressed to Basilissa. Cf. PG XXXVII 385-387.

two were sisters. They were living virtuous lives as ascetics in the Holy Land which St. Gregory had recently visited. He exhorts them to be on their guard against the heresies and depraved morality which he had regretfully observed as widespread in that region.¹¹

A rather uninformative reference to a woman of the army occurs in the *Contra Eunomium*.¹² The context does not make it clear whether she was a camp follower or the wife of a soldier. She could have been either, for no Roman disciplinary measures had ever succeeded in ridding the army of the meretrices, and in the fourth century soldiers were permitted to marry and have their families with them wherever they were stationed.¹³

In outlining the youthful career of Aëtius St. Gregory barely refers to a woman whom he calls Ampelis and who he implies was at one time a mistress of Aëtius.¹⁴

B. MORALS

Aimé Puech has put it very well when he says that without a doubt Christianity had been able to reform the way of life of a great many individuals, but it had not succeeded by the fourth century in altering the way of life of society taken as a whole.¹⁵ The moralists and preachers of that century paint a black picture indeed of the vices of the society of their day, both Christian and non-Christian, the while they depict with enthusiastic hyperbole certain instances of virtuous Christian life and practice. St. Gregory's references to contemporary morals also follow the pattern of these extremes of pessimism and optimism. Though such testimony cannot be accepted at face value as a witness to life and times by reason of its obvious exaggeration, still it cannot be summarily rejected, since other and more impartial sources also attest both the basic moral degeneracy of the times in general and the

¹¹ Ep. III P 18, 1-9; P 18,24 - 19-15; cf. Ep. II P 14, 8-17.

¹² J I 33,16 - 34,11.

¹³ Cf. MM XI 307-308.

¹⁴ J I 33, 4-7. Cf. Jaeger's note ad loc.

¹⁵ Puech (2) 61.

¹⁶ Cf. Fliche et Martin III 371-392; CMH I 593-597.

undoubted moral excellence of many individuals.¹⁶ Further, in some instances the exaggerations of St. Gregory are instructive for their own sake as being the reactions of a fourth century spirit to the passing scene.

On the one hand he ascribes to the faction which opposed him during the trying period following his unwilling accession to the office of Bishop of Sebastea, moral corruption especially in the realm of charity and honesty.¹⁷ Lying, he declares, is actually preferred by these people to truth-telling; it is considered to be a mark of distinction to have been convicted of wrong-doing, and "insolence and harshness and lack of feeling and offensiveness in speech are thought to be public-spiritedness and a kind of good taste."¹⁸

Likewise, after visiting Jerusalem he reports that "there is not a species of uncleanness which is not dared among the inhabitants" and he goes on to enumerate moral abuses which he had seen rampant in the Holy Land,¹⁹ testimony which is amply documented by other extant literary remains of the fourth and fifth centuries.²⁰ St. Gregory's reaction was a nostalgic and appreciative evaluation of things "back home," as one might expect of a rural Cappadocian amid the teeming, profligate life of Jerusalem, a pilgrimage city. He writes soberly, "Only to this extent were we helped by the journey as to know by comparison that our own altars are much holier than those elsewhere."²¹ And

Rather would one think that God dwells in the nation of the Cappadocians than elsewhere; for one could not enumerate in the whole world, I think, as many altars as

¹⁷ For the location of Sebastea cf. Cumont 217 ff. On the spelling of the name and on St. Gregory's sojourn there cf. Pasquali SIFC 75-87. Cf. also Diekamp's indispensable article (1) 384-401.

¹⁸ Ep. XIX P 65, 10-17.

¹⁹ Ep. II P 14, 8-15; Ep. III P 19, 9-15.

²⁰ Cf., e.g., Jerome Ep. LVIII; Aug. *De Opere Monachorum* XXVIII; Basil Ep. XLII; Deferrari I 258-259 and note. Paula and Eustochium seem to present a very different picture (Jerome Ep. XLVI 10) but it must be remembered that they are speaking of ascetics living in the Holy Land, and not of the majority of the inhabitants.

²¹ Ep. II P 16, 6-8.

there are among them through which the name of the Lord is magnified.²²

In the *Letters* St. Gregory is often preoccupied with painful experiences of a personal nature which he had to endure because of moral perversity on the part of others. He tells, for instance, of being slandered on the question of the orthodoxy of his doctrine.²³ During and before his exile and while he was at Sebastea he seems to have been the object of petty persecution which took the form of insulting criticism of his person, his dress, his mannerisms.²⁴ This was especially painful to one of his sensitive temperament. We must, of course, make allowance for this sensitiveness in accepting what he says in this connection of the maliciousness and two-faced behavior of many of his contemporaries,²⁵ but his testimony does nonetheless bear witness to a certain lack of moral integrity among them.

A similar inference may be drawn from St. Gregory's imputing of dishonesty to the workmen of Cappadocia;²⁶ also from what he tells us of Aëtius and Eunomius who were not isolated individuals but typical of one kind of spiritual and intellectual leader of the day. The *Contra Eunomium* acquaints us with both the unscrupulous fraudulency practiced by Aëtius in the course of his checkered career²⁷ and the glittering sophistry of Eunomius.²⁸ St. Gregory represents the latter as a persistent advocate of the tenet that one ought to cater to natural inclinations rather than resist them.²⁹

In two additional references St. Gregory expresses a pessimistic view of the moral tenor of his times³⁰ and contrasts the charity of

²² *Ibid.*, 14, 2-6.

²³ Ep. V P 29, 4-6.

²⁴ Cf. Ep. XVIII P 56-59 *passim*. Also Ep. XII P 41, 16-20 and Ep. X P 37-38 *passim*. It is not clear precisely to which period these letters refer. Pasquali is of the opinion that they concern St. Gregory's difficulties at Sebastea which Ep. XIX graphically pictures. Cf. SIFC 75-87 and 92-96.

²⁵ Cf. also Ep. XVI P 47, 13 - 48, 23.

²⁶ Ep. XXV P 79, 8-11 and 26-30.

²⁷ J I 32, 16 - 34, 25.

²⁸ In the *Contra Eunomium passim*.

²⁹ J I 52, 13-19.

³⁰ Ep. I P 1, 14 - 2, 1.

a former day with the lack of it in contemporary society.³¹ While the comparison, as far as Christian communities are concerned, is undoubtedly true, both references seem to be nothing more than commonplace laudations of the past at the expense of the present.

On the other hand, he also points out examples of moral excellence among his contemporaries. Throughout the *Contra Eunomium* he sets over against the reprehensible qualities of Eunomius the admirable character of another spiritual and intellectual leader of the age: St. Basil. "By a most careful self-control he made chastity and propriety, and complete purity of soul and body the rule for himself and also for his immediate followers," declares his brother.³²

He refers admiringly also to the life of St. Macrina the Younger and the group of virgins who lived in a religious community with her. Among them, he says approvingly,

you could have seen something unbelievable even to your own eyes: flesh 'not seeking its own,' appetite rendered void with regard to its own instincts (as we surmise it will be at the resurrection), streams of tears shed to the measure of a draught, mouth always heeding the law, hearing devoted to divine things, hand ever moving in response to commands.³³

He addresses Epistle III to three women whom he congratulates for living good and virtuous lives amid the immorality he had had the opportunity to observe at first hand during his visit to the Holy Land.³⁴

In speaking of the ascetics of his day he writes that in that way of life men and women live entirely apart from one another in a pure and celibate state in which chastity prospers in all its integrity. That he is here referring to the ideal but not to universal practice in his time is clear when one examines the Church legislation and the literature of the fourth century.³⁵

³¹ P 5, 23 - 6, 3.

³² J I 52, 10-13.

³³ Ep. XIX P 62, 22 - 63, 1.

³⁴ Ep. III P 18, 24-27.

³⁵ Ep. II P 12, 22 - 13, 3. Cf. e.g., Mansi III 1134; Pourrat 174-175; "Cenobitisme" DACL II 3082; Bas. Ep. XLVI *To a Fallen Virgin*; etc.

It is interesting that St. Gregory seems to take the religious state as his standard for measuring all morals.

C. TRAVEL AND PILGRIMAGES

1. *Pilgrimages*

The making of pilgrimages has enjoyed popularity during all ages.³⁶ After the death of Christ, with the spread of Christianity many of the faithful conceived the desire to visit the places where He had lived and died.³⁷ We have no proof of pilgrimages coming from a distance in early times,³⁸ but when pilgrimages are first mentioned in the literature that remains to us they are spoken of as common occurrences. Early in the fourth century Eusebius makes such a reference.³⁹

After the Peace of Constantine a veritable passion for pilgrimages manifested itself and especially for those to the Holy Land.⁴⁰ Jerusalem was soon cleared of the idols and remnants of pagan worship and the places traditionally associated with the birth, passion, and death of Christ were made available to those who wished to venerate them.⁴¹ People of both sexes and of all classes of

³⁶ Cf. Glover 125 ff.

³⁷ Jerome *Ep.* XLVI.

³⁸ The Christians of the immediate vicinity had uninterruptedly venerated the Holy Places, except perhaps during the troubles of 70 A. D. Cf. DACL VII 2309. Only a few pilgrims from a distance are recorded to have visited before the fourth century, *ibid.* 2311. The reverence shown the Holy Places by Christians from earliest times may be attested by the fact that the pagans soon after the death of Christ erected shrines to their gods over Calvary, Bethlehem, and other sacred localities in order to ridicule the Christian faith. Cf. "Jerusalem" DTC VIII 998; DACL VII 2308-2310; Jerome *Ep.* LVIII, 3, 5.

³⁹ *H.E.* VI, 11.

⁴⁰ We are concerned here only with pilgrimages to the Holy Land, but it may be well to note that there were many other centers of Christian piety which attracted pilgrims, e.g. Rome, Egypt, and the tombs of the martyrs in various places. Cf. "Wallfahrt" LTK X 736-738; Gorce 3-12; Delahaye (1) *passim*.

⁴¹ Cf. Eusebius *De Vita Constantini* I. III c. XLIII; "Hélène Impératrice" DACL VI 2126-2135.

Christian society⁴² were caught up in the vogue of making pilgrimages to these sites.⁴³ The greatest esteem and approbation of this practice was evinced by eminent ecclesiastics of the time, as Saints Jerome,⁴⁴ John Chrysostom,⁴⁵ Augustine,⁴⁶ and Gregory of Nyssa himself.⁴⁷

As with all human undertakings, however, abuses arose. Some began to attach undue importance to pilgrimages so as to think one could not be saved without making them.⁴⁸ A praiseworthy custom was degenerating into a dangerous superstition. Besides, pilgrims while en route were a prey to all kinds of moral dangers, and it was not uncommon for them to be ensnared. Especially was it dangerous for those who had dedicated their lives to God in the religious state to be travelling hither and thither in the midst of the seductions of the world from which they professed to be severed. Some of them succumbed to temptation.⁴⁹ In the light of such catastrophes, ecclesiastics zealously warned against undue esteem for pilgrimages and the indiscriminate making of them, particularly by ascetics.⁵⁰

Epistle II of St. Gregory of Nyssa belongs to this type of admonition, and testifies vividly to the popularity of the practice of making pilgrimages to the Holy Land in his day, to the undesirable conditions under which they must be made, and especially to the spiritual perils to which all pilgrims, and above all ascetics were exposed. He addresses his advice expressly to the latter, that is, as he says, to those who have taken up the "higher life,"⁵¹ "the life according to philosophy,"⁵² etc. He does not forbid these to undertake pilgrimages nor does he even say that it is illicit for

⁴² Cf. Jerome *Epp.* XLVI, 10 and CVIII, 3.

⁴³ Gorce 9-10.

⁴⁴ Esp. *Epp.* XLVI and XLVII.

⁴⁵ In *Ep. I ad Thes. Cap. V* Hom. VIII 3.

⁴⁶ *Ep.* XXVIII 1,6.

⁴⁷ *Ep.* III P 17,18 - 18,8.

⁴⁸ Jerome *Ep.* XLVII.

⁴⁹ *Ep.* II P 13, 14-21. Cf. Gorce 30-35.

⁵⁰ Cf. Basil *Ep.* XLII *ad Chilonem*; Jerome *Ep.* LVIII 4; Augustine *de Opere Monachorum* XXVIII; Gorce 31-32.

⁵¹ *Ep.* II P 11, 5.

⁵² P 12, 22.

them to do so, but advises them to refrain from making them for two reasons: first, Christ in his teachings nowhere prescribes pilgrimages as necessary for salvation; second, they are fraught with spiritual danger for "those who have entered upon the perfect life."⁵³ He describes these dangers in detail, particularly those incumbent on women,⁵⁴ and concludes by an exquisite passage:

change of place does not effect God's approach, but wherever you may be, God will come to you, if your soul's lodging is found such that the Lord may dwell in you and walk among you. But if you have the inward man full of evil thoughts, even though you be on Golgotha, on the Mount of Olives, or under the memorial of the Resurrection, you are as far from receiving Christ within you as those are who have not acknowledged His sovereignty. Accordingly, beloved, advise the brethren 'to be abroad from the body to the Lord' and not from Cappadocia to Palestine.⁵⁵

⁵³ P 11,12 - 12,19.

⁵⁴ Cf. p. 48 *infra*.

⁵⁵ Ep. II P 16, 10-20. Because he advises in *Letter II* against making pilgrimages of devotion to the Holy Land, St. Gregory has been accused of condemning pilgrimages altogether. It must be recalled, however, that he is merely urging upon "those who have taken upon themselves the higher life," i.e. ascetics, that such pilgrimages are not only unnecessary but even extremely dangerous for them.

The authenticity of the letter has been called in question by some Catholic writers because of its content, but it is accepted as genuinely Gregory's by Tillemont XI 581-582; Puech III 434; Bardenhewer III 208; Pasquali *Prolegomena* XXIII - XXXVII and LXXIII - LXXIV.

St. Gregory has also been charged with inconsistency on the ground that he praises in *Letter III* what he blames in *Letter II*. This inconsistency is only apparent. In both letters he is sincere, but the purpose and circumstances of each control its tenor. On one hand, to make much of the passing feeling of devotion which any sincere Christian would naturally feel at seeing the Holy Places would have vitiated the whole purpose of *Letter II*. He chooses, then, to ignore this emotional reaction in consideration of its transient and subjective nature, and to place emphasis rather on the very tangible disadvantages which even impede the obtaining of such devotion.

On the other hand, in writing to the pious virgins, Eustathia, Ambrosia, and Basilissa, who were living edifying lives in the Holy Land, he could safely give expression to the holy satisfaction he himself had felt in seeing "the tokens of the great love of the Lord for us." Ep. III P 18, 1-8.

2. Means of Travel

From the *Letters* we can glean some useful information regarding the mechanics of pilgrimages and other travel in the fourth century.⁵⁶ The physical difficulties of travel at that time are, of course, common knowledge. Travellers sometimes find rainy weather most undesirable, but on at least one occasion the saint records it as his experience that immediately after the rain travel was facilitated, since the carriage ran more smoothly "its wheel easily sliding along in the moist mud on the surface (of the road)."⁵⁷ Here St. Gregory unwittingly testifies to the presence in Cappadocia of fairly wide roads surfaced by hard packed dirt. He was evidently making use of one of the roads which Rome had been at pains to construct throughout Cappadocia after she had annexed that province.⁵⁸ Testimony to the efficiency of these roads as a means of travel in the fourth century is found in St. Gregory's statement that the journey from Nyssa to Annesi in Pontus was one of merely ten days, though it is apparent that the route over the then available roads was two or three hundred miles.⁵⁹ He mentions the presence of milestones on the road he traversed to visit Helladius in the mountain region, a circumstance which indicates that this also was a Roman road, despite the remoteness of the place.⁶⁰ That it was not as carefully constructed as the main highways, but still was a useful means of travel, is attested by St. Gregory's account. We learn that he had accomplished the first part of the journey in a conveyance which could no longer be used when he branched off onto the mountain road. He was able at first to proceed on horseback but, as the road became increasingly steep and rough, he had to alternate on foot and on horseback and

⁵⁶ The *Contra Eunomium* has no references pertaining to this subject.

⁵⁷ Ep. VI P 32, 14-25.

⁵⁸ CAH XI 609.

⁵⁹ Ep. XIX P 63, 4-6. The distance cannot be calculated more precisely since the route he followed is not indicated. For the possible routes and the location of Annesi cf. Ramsay (3) 254-270, 326-327, and map opposite p. 27.

⁶⁰ The exact location of this road is doubtful since the only place-name mentioned in connection with it, Andamucena (P 3, 13), cannot be placed with certainty. For the milestone as a purely Roman device cf. "Milliarium" DS III 1897-1899.

finally to advance on foot altogether, leading his horse. However, though steep and narrow the road must still have been a fairly good one, for he tells us that the journey was one of about fifteen miles and was completed in the space of one night, mostly through the darkness. The same route was covered in the return journey in about seven or eight hours by daylight for the most part, and with the added complication of a sudden storm.⁶¹

The well-known fact that means of travel on land in the fourth century included travel on foot, on horseback, or in some sort of conveyance, is likewise illustrated by St. Gregory's account of this excursion. In another letter he also mentions having travelled in a carriage specifying that this one was drawn by mules,⁶² and in Letter II he declares that he made his journey to Jerusalem and the neighboring Roman province of Arabia⁶³ in public conveyance furnished by the Emperor.⁶⁴

3. Inns

The ancient law of hospitality whereby travellers were promptly received into private homes became an increasing problem with the increase of travel. Inns and hostels,⁶⁵ first under private ownership and later also under the management of the state, provided a solution to the problem, but a solution which had its drawbacks. Almost from their inception inns and inn-keepers had an evil reputation.⁶⁶ Long before the fourth century people of means seldom patronized them, for they carried all the conveniences of

⁶¹ Ep. I P 3, 5-19; 8,22 - 9,4.

⁶² Ep. VI P 32, 23.

⁶³ The Roman province of Arabia did not at any time, of course, include the same territory as what is known as Arabia to-day. On the extent and boundaries of the Roman province cf. "Arabia als romische Provinz" PW II 359-362.

⁶⁴ Ep. II P 15, 9-11. For a complete treatment of the various kinds of carriages in use during the fourth century and the *Cursus Publicus* cf. "Cursus Publicus" DS I 1645-1672 esp. 1657-1659. Cf. also Gorce 41-63.

⁶⁵ On the Inns in antiquity cf. "Caupona" DS I 973-974; PW III 1806-1808; Friedländer I 290-294; Gorce 143-145. Of these only Gorce cites St. Gregory of Nyssa as a source.

⁶⁶ For a list of some of the ancient sources, cf. "Caupona" DS I 973 notes 5 and 12.

a luxurious home with them on their journeys.⁶⁷ Those who frequented inns were mostly the poor, people of low caste, and the off-scourings of the upper class. The ordinary inn did not invite better company, since it was sordid, dingy, and vermin-ridden.⁶⁸

In his travels St. Gregory had no need to patronize such inns, for persons of his rank were well provided for by the state⁶⁹ and could readily obtain hospitality as well from other ecclesiastics. But as he went about, he had the opportunity to observe the squalid accommodations and loose morality prevalent in most public hospices. He warns prospective pilgrims to the Holy Land as follows: "Inns, and hostels, and cities in eastern regions show a high degree of license and indifference to evil."⁷⁰

During the fourth century, it is true, there was a movement, in which St. Basil was one of the first to participate,⁷¹ to provide accommodations of a suitable character for travellers and especially for Christians who were making pilgrimages. Within the lifetime of St. Gregory of Nyssa the *Xenodochia*, well-ordered and comparatively comfortable inns, were established but for the most part only in large cities.⁷² Pilgrims of that day would doubtless be forced to lodge in the ordinary, undesirable type of inn during many stages of their journey.

St. Gregory makes much of this difficulty when he protests the making of pilgrimages by ascetics of either sex, a practice which he says has become very common.⁷³ His comments are by implication interesting testimony to the inadequacy of the provision made by most inns for the contemporary traveller, though he is concerned more with the moral peril than with material inconveniences.⁷⁴ He explains that a certain looseness of behavior which is

⁶⁷ Cf. Friedländer I 287-289.

⁶⁸ For a graphic picture of the squalid and immoral character of inns under the early Empire, cf. Friedländer I 292-293.

⁶⁹ On the *Mansiones*, cf. "Cursus Publicus" DS I 1655-1656. For all phases of the word *Mansio*, see Kubitschek's very complete article "Mansio" in PW XIV 1231-1252.

⁷⁰ Ep. II P 13, 14-16.

⁷¹ Bas. Ep. XCIV.

⁷² Cf. Gorce 147-155.

⁷³ Ep. II P 11,13 - 12,4.

⁷⁴ Ep. II P 12, 15-20.

unavoidable while on a journey endangers the virtue of chastity, a virtue which is inseparable from the way of life of ascetics. Women especially run the risk of a loss of reputation, both en route and in putting up at inns, for a woman must of necessity be accompanied by a male companion if only to be assisted in mounting upon and dismounting from her horse, he declares. Now whether this companion is a relative, or a friend, or else a hired guide, in any case "the procedure does not escape blame," St. Gregory tells us, "for in lying down to rest beside either a stranger or one personally attached, she does not keep the law of chastity."⁷⁵

Since the pilgrim is travelling on foot or on horseback, it is impossible to keep up a monastic atmosphere en route, after the fashion of St. Gregory himself while on his journey to the Holy Land. "The conveyance served us as church and monastery, since during the whole journey we all sang hymns together and fasted together unto the Lord." He and his companions therefore avoided most of the discomfort and exposure to temptation which they observed as inevitable for the ordinary pilgrim.⁷⁶

Two other references to stopping-places during journeys belong here. One was an over-night stop apparently in the open; and the other, a three or four hour halt in some sort of shelter to escape rain.⁷⁷

4. Place Names

The places in the Holy Land which St. Gregory mentions as especially venerated are: Bethlehem,⁷⁸ the Anastasis, or church

⁷⁵ P 12,22 - 13,14.

⁷⁶ Ep. II P 15, 11-17.

⁷⁷ Ep. I P 9, 4-5; Ep. VI P 32, 18-22.

⁷⁸ Ep. II P 16, 2; Ep. III P 18, 9. The sanctuary of the Nativity appears to be, among all the Holy Places, that which can claim the most ancient witnesses. Justin Martyr, less than one hundred and twenty years after the death of Christ, was the first and there were many others. Fourth century witnesses tell of the magnificent church built there by Saint Helen and embellished by Constantine. This would, of course, be the one visited by St. Gregory. Cf. "Bethléhem" DACL II 832-837; "Nativité de Jésus" DACL XII 934-958.

built over the Holy Sepulcher,⁷⁹ the Mount of Olives,⁸⁰ and Golgotha.⁸¹

He makes interesting commentaries on some place names to which he refers. Eunomius, he says, came from Oltiseris, an obscure town in the territory of Corniaspe on the confines of Galatia and Cappadocia, and resented being called a Galatian instead of a Cappadocian by St. Basil.⁸² This is not the only reference St. Gregory makes to the fact that Galatia was held in bad repute. With their customary easy-going character the Galatians went over to the party of Valens without a struggle, he tells us.⁸³ In speaking of Vanota he comments, "The great beauty of the place is not reflected in this Galatian name (i.e. Vanota)."⁸⁴

Vanota, one of the most interesting places mentioned by St. Gregory, has been treated in detail above.⁸⁵ Ramsay says it was doubtless beside Nyssa,⁸⁶ but St. Gregory's wonder at what he saw there and the fact that the estate was thickly wooded, something not true of Nyssa and its environs at any time of which we know in antiquity, suggest rather that it was located some distance away.⁸⁷ He definitely places it on the banks of the Halys River, describing the latter with lyric appreciation as beautifying

⁷⁹ Ep. II P 16, 3 and 16; Ep. III P 18, 9. Cf. "Jérusalem" DACL VII 2312-2318. See also Strzygowski (3) 45 and 56.

⁸⁰ Ep. II P 16, 5 and 15; Ep. III P 18, 9. Cf. "Jérusalem" DACL VII 2318-2326.

⁸¹ Ep. II P 16,15; Ep. III P 18,9. Scholars for a long time held without question that in the fourth century a single edifice enclosed the Holy Sepulcher, Golgotha, and the cistern in which the instruments of the Passion were found. The text of Etheria no longer permits this interpretation. Her text formally distinguishes the Anastasis from another church raised on Golgotha, and designated by the name Ecclesia Major or Martyrion. Cf. "Jerusalem" DACL VII 2375 and 2312-2318.

⁸² J I 54, 1-6; Cf. J II 293, 21. For the boundaries of Cappadocia cf. Ramsay (3) 315.

⁸³ J I 62, 22-23.

⁸⁴ Ep. XX P 66, 8; cf. Müller, 67-74, for a discussion of the origin of the name. Another reference to Galatia is found: J I 61, 28.

⁸⁵ Pp. 5-6, 15-17, 27-28.

⁸⁶ (3) 288.

⁸⁷ This is Müller's view, 82; he conjectures that it was in Galatia proper, much further down the Halys valley.

the spot by its banks, shining like a golden ribbon through its deep purple robe as it reddens its current with its silt.⁸⁸

In recounting a journey which he made to Nyssa after a long absence from his see, St. Gregory mentions two towns by name, Kelosina and Vestene. Ramsay, basing his conjecture upon these names and upon the fact that our author says that his route followed the banks of the Halys River, traces the route with plausibility. It is noteworthy, however, that because he follows the reading *ἐαρσοῦ*⁸⁹ he has located a town Earsos near Vestene on his map.⁹⁰ This supposed town is not mentioned by Ramsay elsewhere, nor is there any evidence beyond the disputed reading for its existence.

Outside Cappadocia St. Gregory refers to the city of Iconium, declaring that the workmen there are superior to those in his own province.⁹¹

He notes the fact that Ibora, which he says is situated on the borders of Pontus, has been inclined toward the true faith from the beginning.⁹² Tarbasthena is also mentioned by St. Gregory. Ramsay identifies it with Parbosena of the Antonine Itinerary but Ruge disagrees with this decision without, however, throwing any light upon the real location of the place.⁹³

Mere mention is made of a number of additional place-names.⁹⁴

⁸⁸ Ep. XX P 67, 9-11.

⁸⁹ Which Pasquali gives as a variant of his *ἐαυτῶν* P 36, 6.

⁹⁰ (3) 278, and map opposite p. 204.

⁹¹ Ep. XXV P 79, 8-11. Cf. p. 31 *supra*.

⁹² Ep. XIX P 63, 21-24. For the location of Ibora cf. Ramsay (3) 326, and Anderson 70 ff.

⁹³ J I 36, 4-5. Ramsay (3) 264. Cf. "Tarbasthena" PW R 2 IV 2292.

⁹⁴ Alexandria: J I 36, 3 and 5. Ancyra: Ep. V P 29, 13. Andamucena: Ep. I P 3, 13. Antioch: Ep. XIX P 63, 14-16. Arabia: Ep. II P 15, 5; J I 65, 25. Armenia: J I 34, 16; 38, 14-15; Ep. XXIX P 84, 4-5. Asia: J I 39, 7. Bithynia: 61, 27; 62, 22. Cilicia: 65, 27. Cappadocia: Ep. XI P 39, 17; Ep. II P 16, 20. Caria: J I 65, 28. Constantinople: J I 37, 7; 47, 7; 53, 5-6; 61, 16. Cyzicus: J I 56, 11; 57, 5-6, 10, 13; 58, 14 and 23. Egypt: J I 65, 25. Ephesus: J I 39, 8 and 11. Hellespont J I 65, 28. Illyricum: *Ibid.* 4. Libya: J I 65, 26. Lycia: *Ibid.* 27. Lydia: *Ibid.* 28. Palestine: J I 65, 25. Ep. II P 16, 20. Pamphylia: J I 65, 28. Phoenicia: *Ibid.* 25. Phrygia: J I 31, 6 and 10. Pisidia: J I 65, 28. Pontus: Ep. XI P 39, 17; Ep. XII P 41, 28; Ep. XIX P 62, 12; 63, 6, 22; 64, 4; J I 28, 9; 38, 14; 65, 27. Propontis: J I 61, 26; 65, 29.

D. LETTER-WRITING.

The prominent place which the letter occupied in both social and intellectual life in the fourth century is indicated to some extent at least by the survival to our time of copious epistolary remains. These represent, of course, only a fraction of the total number of letters actually written by the assiduous epistolographers of St. Gregory's day.⁹⁵ Like so many of his contemporaries he also was frequently engaged in writing letters, for internal evidence in some of his extant epistles indicates that they formed only a part of an extensive correspondence the remainder of which has apparently perished.⁹⁶ He tells one of his correspondents, for instance, "I sent by letter to your Reverence and to many others."⁹⁷ These letters are not extant. Again, he refers to friends as having "pelted" him with missives and these in all probability had received a reply,⁹⁸ but none of this correspondence has survived the years. In Epistle V he mentions having written previous letters to defend himself against the accusations of his enemies but these too are lost to us.⁹⁹

Though the letters of St. Gregory which remain do not bulk large among those of his contemporaries we may glean from them nevertheless tangible evidence of the social and intellectual aspects of epistolography in his day. In investigating and summing up this testimony I have followed Pasquali¹⁰⁰ in accepting the letters

Rome: Ep. XVII P 52, 18-19. Sebastea: P 84, 2; 86, 15; 89, 4; for its location and history cf. Cumont 217-288. Syria: J I 65, 23. Thrace: *Ibid.* 29; 66, 1. Rivers: Nile Ep. XIII P 44, 5. Danube J I 66, 2. This list, which I have tried to make complete, supplements the Index Nominum of Jaeger, II 390-391, which designedly omits geographical names. The above list adds nothing, however, to Pasquali's complete index to the *Letters*.

⁹⁵ On the extent and variety of the correspondence carried on by eminent men cf. Riepl 265-267. For a quantitative estimate of the epistolary output of the Golden Age of Patristic Literature cf. Dinneen VI - VII.

⁹⁶ There are thirty letters in the corpus, two of which, XXVI and XXX, were not actually written by St. Gregory.

⁹⁷ Ep. I P 2, 11-12.

⁹⁸ Ep. XI P 39, 16-17.

⁹⁹ P 29, 16-19.

¹⁰⁰ Pasquali, *Prolegomena II*, points out the difficulty he had, while editing the letters, in distinguishing between true letters and other works cast in epistolary form. Cf. Bardenhewer III 25 ff.

in his critical edition as real letters—albeit polished and to that extent “literary”—leaving to others to explore the intricacies of the moot question of what comprises a real letter and where to draw the line between that type and others.¹⁰¹ Consequently the terms “letter” and “epistle” are used interchangeably of St. Gregory’s letters in this study.

Fortunately for our purpose his letters embrace a wide variety of types. Hence, by reviewing their subject-matter, the correspondents to whom they are addressed, and the occasions which provoked them, we can gain an idea of the manifold and diverse interests and contacts which gave rise to the correspondence of a fourth century bishop.

There are to begin with, purely social letters, such as Epistle IX¹⁰² which is an invitation to the sophist Stagirus¹⁰³ to be a “guest speaker” at some sort of gathering at which St. Gregory was presiding. In Epistle X,¹⁰⁴ another social letter, he assures his friend and fellow Bishop, Otreius of Melitene, that his letter brightened gloomy days because of the news it contained, namely that his friend was going to visit him soon. Of the same tenor is Epistle XII¹⁰⁵ which urges a dear friend to hasten as much as possible his projected visit to the Bishop of Nyssa. In it the latter gracefully acknowledges the receipt of a letter telling of the coming visit, a letter which he compares to the advent of spring to a cold and ice-bound world. It affects him, surrounded as he is by cold and unfriendly people, as the first signs of spring affect those who have been weather-bound throughout the winter. He finishes cordially, “Come then, dear one, bringing an abundance of blessings for us, namely yourself; for this will be the completion of our blessing.”

Epistle XI¹⁰⁶ is addressed to the same correspondent. St. Gregory expresses his grateful appreciation of the kindness and friend-

¹⁰¹ Cf. “Epistolographie” PW Suppl. V 186-189; Delahaye (2) 404; Wagner.

¹⁰² P 36-37. Cf. Guignet 39-63.

¹⁰³ Cf. Chap. I note 51 *supra*.

¹⁰⁴ P 37-38.

¹⁰⁵ P 40-42.

¹⁰⁶ P 38-40.

liness toward him of this friend, Eupatrius, and his father. Their friendship has been shown in many ways but especially by writing letters to him while he was living amid uncongenial surroundings.

Another social letter is Epistle XXVIII¹⁰⁷ written to express St. Gregory’s thanks for a letter which he had received and which he gracefully likens to a rose. Epistles XIII and XIV,¹⁰⁸ both addressed to Libanius the sophist, are also part of his social correspondence. The former pays tribute to Libanius as a teacher of rhetoric. In the second, after expatiating at some length on his appreciation of Libanius’ letter, he begs the sophist not to do what he had threatened at the end of his letter: apparently either to cease his pursuit of rhetoric or to abridge it. “It is not right that the beams of your eloquence should be dimmed on account of those who are dim-sighted in the perceptions of their souls.”¹⁰⁹

Completing the category of social letters is the elaborate epistle addressed to the owner of the luxurious country villa of Vanota where St. Gregory visited during the absence of his host. To manifest his enjoyment of and gratitude for the hospitality shown him he composed this letter enlarging upon the beauties of the estate.¹¹⁰

Two epistles may be classed as business letters. One of these concerns the construction of a shrine in which St. Gregory was interested.¹¹¹ He asks his correspondent, Amphilochius, to secure workmen for him, and gives some specifications and a rough plan of the structure to assist his friend to know how many workmen he must procure.¹¹²

The second business letter is a reply to Epistle XXVI. The latter is included in the corpus of St. Gregory’s works, but was actually written by Stagirus the sophist to the Bishop of Nyssa. Stagirus asks for some beams with which to roof his house, cleverly and wittily phrasing the request.¹¹³ St. Gregory couches

¹⁰⁷ P 82-83; formerly included among the letters of St. Basil. Cf. P LXI - LXIII.

¹⁰⁸ P 42-44 and 44-46.

¹⁰⁹ P 46, 2-4. Cf. Pasquali SIFC 108.

¹¹⁰ Ep. XX P 66-70.

¹¹¹ Ep. XXV P 76-80.

¹¹² Cf. pp. 25 ff. *supra*.

¹¹³ Ep. XXVI P 80-81.

his reply after the playful manner of the sophist and declares that he has ordered three hundred beams to be transferred to the sophist.¹¹⁴

Religious matters and church discipline often afforded occasions for letters. They were used as a means of communication between a bishop and a presbyter, as Epistle XXVI testifies,¹¹⁵ also between bishops on ecclesiastical matters, as is shown by Epistles XVII and XXII.¹¹⁶ On one occasion St. Gregory wrote a letter to the presbyters in Nicomedia, where an episcopal election was about to take place, advising them of the qualities a good bishop ought to possess.¹¹⁷

The apologetic value of the letter was commonplace to the early Christians. In Epistle V St. Gregory tells his correspondent how in other letters he has defended himself against accusations regarding his orthodoxy and then devotes this letter¹¹⁸ to a brief defense of the doctrine of the Trinity. Epistle XXIV¹¹⁹ is a defense of the same dogma. In Epistle IV he explains the mystical reason why the feast of Christmas occurs at the winter solstice and that of Easter, at the vernal equinox.¹²⁰

Two letters of St. Gregory regard the *Contra Eunomium*. Of these, Epistle XV¹²¹ accompanied a first draft of Book I of the *Contra Eunomium*, apologizing for its tardy appearance and requesting a critical reading of it. The other letter¹²² is addressed to his brother Peter, later Bishop of Sebastea, and also accompanies a copy of the same book of the *Contra Eunomium*. It explains

¹¹⁴ Ep. XXVII P 81-82. Whether this is a sale, gift, or loan cannot be ascertained; cf. pp. 33-34 *supra*.

¹¹⁵ P 81, 8-10.

¹¹⁶ P 49, 19-22 and 71, 10-17. St. Basil bears witness that correspondence carried on between scattered members of the Church is "an old custom which has become prevalent through long observance," Ep. LXII. It was especially common for bishops; cf. Fox 65 and 69. On Ep. XXII cf. esp. Diekamp (1) 400-401.

¹¹⁷ Ep. XVII P 49-56.

¹¹⁸ P 29-31 and 89-92.

¹¹⁹ P 72-76.

¹²⁰ P 25-28. Cf. pp. 170-171 *infra*.

¹²¹ P 46-47.

¹²² Ep. XXIX P 84-86.

when and why the book was written, how it was planned, and why it was not as complete as he had at first intended. The letter might be considered the foreword to the *Contra Eunomium*.¹²³

Three other letters deal with religious or ecclesiastical matters. Epistle XXI¹²⁴ introduces a monk to a prospective candidate to the monastic life. Epistle II¹²⁵ warns against the indiscriminate making of pilgrimages to the Holy Land by ascetics, both men and women. Epistle III¹²⁶ addressed to three pious women living in the Holy Land, exhorts them to remain faithful to the orthodox faith regardless of the persuasive doctrines of the heretics living about them. Even though they live in the midst of the Holy Places they are not immune from the contagion of vice and heresy, he tells them.

Introductory or intercessory letters played some part in St. Gregory's correspondence.¹²⁷ Epistle VII¹²⁸ is a plea to a high official in behalf of a young man, Synesius, related in some way to the Bishop of Nyssa, who is in danger of the death penalty for an offence which St. Gregory thinks he has committed almost unwittingly. He can be rescued only by God, or after Him by the recipient of the letter. It is impossible to ascertain the nature of the "crime" of the young man, for St. Gregory exhibits much reticence and speaks only in vague and general terms. He mentions the fact that he intends besides this letter to write others to the boy's accusers, in order if possible to soften them.

Epistle VIII¹²⁹ is a letter of introduction and intercession. The

¹²³ Epistle XXX (P 86) of the corpus of St. Gregory's works also concerns the *Contra Eunomium*, but is written to the Bishop by his brother Peter in reply to Epistle XXIX. Peter congratulates St. Gregory upon the first section of the *Contra Eunomium* and spurs him on to complete the second.

¹²⁴ P 70-71, formerly included in the letters of St. Basil; cf. P 70, note, and LIX - LXI; Pasquali SIFC 99 ff.

¹²⁵ P 11-17.

¹²⁶ P 17-25.

¹²⁷ This type was common in the correspondence of Synesius: cf. Pando 58 and 61; of St. Augustine: cf. Keenan 98-101; of St. Basil: cf. Fox 84. Bishops in the early fourth century had been accorded the privilege of intercession; cf. "Intercessio" DS III 548; Guignet 63 ff.

¹²⁸ P 34-35.

¹²⁹ P 35-36.

first part of it is an effusive assurance of his friendly feeling for his correspondent and of his appreciation of his friendship. He then asks him to befriend a young man named Alexander, apparently the bearer of the letter, in the matters for which he goes to him. Regarding these matters the saint says he would prefer not to speak in a letter.

In some of his correspondence St. Gregory treats of matters that more closely concern himself. Epistle I¹⁸⁰ is written to Flavian, Bishop of Antioch, telling of St. Gregory's humiliating visit to Bishop Helladius, his metropolitan, and reviewing the increasing tension and conflict typical of their previous relations. Another letter expresses the joy he felt at receiving a missive from Otreius, Bishop of Melitene, and describes the animosity with which he was then surrounded and the discomforts he was enduring.¹⁸¹

In Epistle XVI he also complains of the attitude of people toward him. He compares their hypocrisy to the actions of players in a game of ball.¹⁸²

Epistle VI contains some biographical detail in that he describes vividly his return to Nyssa in stormy weather when, despite the inclemency of the elements, he was enthusiastically received by his people all along the route. He says he wrote the letter just after his arrival when he "had both rejoiced and wept with his people."¹⁸³

Epistle XIX¹⁸⁴ contains matter of interest not only to biographers of St. Gregory himself, but also to those of his pious sister, St. Macrina the Younger. He describes her death and way of life and how, when he returned to his own see after her funeral, he found that the Galatians had spread heresy among his people during his absence. With God's help, he tells us, he restored the faith. Then he was called upon by the orthodox Christians of Ibora to protect them against heretics because their bishop had recently died. Sum-

¹⁸⁰ P 1-10. For a detailed account cf. pp. 163 ff. *infra*.

¹⁸¹ Ep. XVIII, P 56-59. Pasquali, SIFC 75 ff., thinks this written at Sebastea as well as Ep. XIX, but it may have been written while he was in exile. Cf. note 24 *supra*.

¹⁸² P 47-48; cf. p. 81 *infra*.

¹⁸³ P 33, 25-26. The occasion seems to have been his return from exile, but cf. Chap. I note 16 *supra*.

¹⁸⁴ P 59-66.

moned from there at the urgent request of the people of Sebastea, he presided at the election of a new bishop, and to his distress was himself elected.¹⁸⁵ In his attempt to reestablish the true faith in Sebastea he was strongly opposed by the heretical civil power. He graphically refers to the difficulties into which he was thus plunged as "Babylonian evils"—a veritable Babylonian captivity.¹⁸⁶ He goes on to describe the ignorance and uncouth ways of the people in that vicinity and his despair of ever being able to reform them. He concludes by asking his correspondent to write saying when they may meet, and begging at least the support of his prayers in his troubles.

Epistle XXIII¹⁸⁷ which is so brief as to be merely a note does not fall readily into any classification. It seems to be a sort of exhortation or word of encouragement addressed to a friend or acquaintance.

In two instances in the *Letters*¹⁸⁸ St. Gregory shows the pronounced reticence so often evident in the letters of his contemporaries. In a third epistle, written to Libanius, he alludes to reticence on the part of his correspondent. In his own missive he makes it plain that he understands perfectly what is meant despite the reticence.¹⁸⁹

There was reason enough for reticence in letters in the fourth century because of the fact that the carriage and delivery of private letters was mostly a private concern and consequently somewhat precarious. Letters sometimes came into the hands of those for whom they were not intended.¹⁴⁰ In the possession of hostile per-

¹⁸⁵ Such incidents as the intervention of a bishop in the election of a colleague from another province, or the forcible transfer of a bishop from one diocese to another were not strange in the fourth century. Cf. Pasquali SIFC 76 and pp. 155 ff. *infra*.

¹⁸⁶ The figurative rather than the literal interpretation of the word *Babylonian* seems logical. Cf. Diekamp (1) 386 ff.

¹⁸⁷ P 72, 3-6.

¹⁸⁸ Ep. VII, esp. P 35, 5-8; and Ep. VIII, esp. P 36, 14-15. Cf. pp. 55-56 *supra*.

¹⁸⁹ Ep. XIV, esp. P 45, 12-14.

¹⁴⁰ Measures were at times taken to prevent letters from being read in transit. On this whole subject cf. Gorce 234 ff. Violations of the privacy of letters were more apt to happen in times of stress like wars; cf. Riepl 279 ff; "Anneaux" DACL I 2177-2178; Fox 69-84; Keenan 65; Pando 65.

sons the contents of letters, if too explicit, might of course, do one considerable harm. In the *Contra Eunomium* St. Gregory mentions that in order to add to the testimony against Aëtius, Athanasius, Bishop of the Galatians, produced a letter of George of Laodicea.¹⁴¹

On the other hand, fourth century epistolographers frequently intended their letters to reach a fairly wide circle of readers, even though addressed to a single correspondent.¹⁴² Sometimes also an epistle not so intended by the author was circulated among a group as happened on at least one occasion when St. Gregory received a letter from Libanius. He tells the latter that he

made the prize (i.e., the letter) accessible to those present and they all shared in the whole of it, each of them striving to possess it; and I did not suffer loss, for as the letter passed through the hands of all it became the personal wealth of each one: of some, on the one hand, who impressed the words on their memory by continuous reading, and of others who copied the words off on writing tablets.¹⁴³

Similarly St. Gregory casually mentions to his correspondent in another letter that before sending it he had allowed a mutual friend to read it, and had also permitted him to read letters previously received from this correspondent.¹⁴⁴

St. Gregory seems to have shared the enjoyment which mankind commonly derives from communicating with absent friends, if we can judge by the allusions he makes to this matter.¹⁴⁵ He assures one friend that he has read and re-read his letter.¹⁴⁶ He urges another to "write and write frequently whenever it is pleasing to you to do so, whether magnifying me as is your wont, or even irritat-

¹⁴¹ J I 32,25 - 33,1.

¹⁴² Cf. Gorce 202.

¹⁴³ Ep. XIV P 44,26 - 45,4.

¹⁴⁴ Ep. XXVIII P 83, 21-23.

¹⁴⁵ Epistolographers of the first centuries of our era frequently gave expression to the pleasure they derived from letters and it became something of a commonplace to do so. Cf. "Lettres Chrésiennes" DACL VIII 2687-2688; also Libanius *Epp.* 303, 637, 719, 1583.

¹⁴⁶ Ep. XVIII P 56, 14-16.

ing me by reproaches."¹⁴⁷ Again, he declares that he writes expressly for the purpose of calling forth another letter in reply.¹⁴⁸ Somewhat floridly but earnestly he assures his absent friend who has written to him at a particularly troubled time of his life: "the spiritual spring resulting from your peaceful sunbeam cleansed my life from sorrow by means of the brightness in your letter."¹⁴⁹ Upon receipt of another epistle he maintains that as soon as he had perused it, straightway his depression of mind was replaced by mental exaltation, and "even the condition of my bodily health was at once changed for the better."¹⁵⁰

Besides these references which cast some light upon the social aspect of epistolography in St. Gregory's day, the *Letters* also furnish testimony to its intellectual estate. They attest that the letter was a literary genre very much in vogue with educated men of the time who looked upon it as a work of art.¹⁵¹ The polished style and the observance of rhetorical conventions in the epistles of St. Gregory and others make it obvious that these compositions were the flowering of a long literary tradition. Our knowledge of that tradition, however, is still somewhat unsatisfactory, since the explicit accounts of the ancient theory of the letter that have come down to us are few and rather perfunctory,¹⁵² and the task of systematically and critically synthesizing the evidence with regard to the history of Greek epistolography in antiquity—including the still forthcoming papyri letters—yet remains to be done.¹⁵³ However, some notion of the norms of letter-writing which St. Gregory and his contemporaries regarded as binding can be deduced from their letters. It is perfectly obvious from them that these epis-

¹⁴⁷ Ep. XXVIII P 83, 12-15.

¹⁴⁸ Ep. XIV P 45, 8-11.

¹⁴⁹ Ep. X P 37, 18-20.

¹⁵⁰ Ep. XIII P 42, 21-28.

¹⁵¹ Guignet 6.

¹⁵² Chiefly: Demetrius *περὶ ἐρμηνείας*; Pseudo-Libanius *ἐπιστολογιαῖοι χαρακτηρισμοί*; Greg. Naz. *Ep.* 51 *To Nicobolus*. These mainly consist of negative precepts regarding style.

¹⁵³ At present Sykutris' article "Epistolographie" PW suppl. V 185-220, is indispensable. Cf. "Lettres Chrésiennes" DACL VIII 2683-2885; "Lettres Classiques" DACL VIII 2885-2942; for a concise discussion of the problems involved cf. Wagner.

tolographers labored with a constant awareness of certain criteria of excellence of style even in private and informal letters. Besides, we have the explicit testimony of one of them, St. Gregory Nazianzen, who in his *Letter to Nicobolus* sums up a few current ideas about the acceptable thing in epistolography, laying particular stress upon faults to be avoided, such as a want of clarity, or an excessive use of rhetorical figures. In particular he warns against a lack of conciseness in allowing the letter to exceed or to fall short of the length proper to the subject matter, a dictum fundamental in the literary tradition of the letter type.¹⁵⁴

The *Letters* of St. Gregory of Nyssa, though generally longer than those of St. Gregory Nazianzen or of Libanius,¹⁵⁵ and despite their marked ornamentation, attest that he was careful to adhere to the principle of conciseness as understood in his day. He tells one of his correspondents that he has avoided "an unlimited letter."¹⁵⁶ He commences the shortest of his epistles, a scant three and a half lines in length, with the explanation: "I am chary of many words out of consideration for your troubles."¹⁵⁷ His letters vary in length from this brief note to voluminous Epistle I with its ten-page account of his troubled relations with Bishop Heliadius. A comparison of the length of the several letters¹⁵⁸ reveals at a glance that St. Gregory preferred the brief, carefully polished letter, though sometimes he was compelled by his subject to write at greater length. The five longer letters¹⁵⁹ are all concerned with serious matters having to do with faith and morals or Church discipline, and so requiring lengthy treatment. Nevertheless they do not lack elegance and precision in diction and style.

The more or less stereotyped arrangement of the Greek letter in the early centuries of the Christian era and for several centuries

¹⁵⁴ PG XXXVII 105-108; cf. P *Prolegomena* I; "Epistolographie" PW Suppl. V 189-190.

¹⁵⁵ Pasquali SIFC 105.

¹⁵⁶ Ep. XIX P 65, 18-21.

¹⁵⁷ Ep. XXIII P 72, 3-4.

¹⁵⁸ In the following table a page is computed as the average length of a page in Pasquali's edition of the *Letters*. 1 page or less . . . 12 letters; 1 to 2 pages . . . 2 letters; 2 to 3 pages . . . 5 letters; 3 to 4 pages . . . 3 letters; 4 pages . . . 3 letters; 6 to 8 pages . . . 4 letters; 10 pages . . . 1 letter.

¹⁵⁹ Six to ten pages each, i.e., Epistles I II III XVII XIX.

previously, as deduced from papyri letters,¹⁶⁰ embraced the following divisions: the formulaic address, the salutatory, the subject of the letter, the closing phrase, and finally the concluding formula.¹⁶¹ St. Gregory's *Letters* show a consciousness of some such general scheme but at the same time a certain freedom in the matter of structure and the marked influence of his rhetorical training.

Only two of them preserve the basic type of the initial formula: ὁ δεινὰ τῷ δεινὶ χαίρειν¹⁶² while twenty have the shortened form which consisted simply of the dative of the name (and sometimes of the office) of the addressee.¹⁶³ The latter is the form most common also in St. Basil's letters.¹⁶⁴ Several of St. Gregory's epistles have πρός and the accusative of the addressee and the genitive of the writer, without explanatory phrases,¹⁶⁵ and two have no surviving initial formula.¹⁶⁶ Two important considerations must be borne in mind, however, in appraising this evidence. First, though certain formulas were customary in private letters we have no evidence that the epistolographer was rigidly bound to use that mode of address;¹⁶⁷ and second, in letters like those of St. Gregory which depend for their text upon manuscript tradition we cannot have the certainty, legitimate in the case of the papyri, that we have the formulaic address precisely as it was originally written.¹⁶⁸

The letter proper opened by convention with a salutation consisting of a formulaic phrase, the text of which varied slightly, expressing a wish for the health or well-being of the addressee.¹⁶⁹ In the epistle which St. Gregory addresses to the clergy of Nico-

¹⁶⁰ These are, of course, our most reliable witnesses in the matter of arrangement, since they are for the most part original documents, not copies many times removed as are the letters which depend upon a manuscript tradition.

¹⁶¹ Cf. "Lettres Chrésiennes" DACL VIII 2779-2795.

¹⁶² Epp. III and XXX.

¹⁶³ Cf. Exler 58-59, 63.

¹⁶⁴ *Passim*. On the contrary only a few of the more formal letters of Theodoret have preserved the prescript. Cf. Wagner.

¹⁶⁵ Epp. V XIX XX XXVI XXVII.

¹⁶⁶ Epp. XXIII XXVIII.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Exler 68; "Epistolographie" PW Suppl. V 195.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. the variants to the initial formulas noted in Pasquali's critical apparatus at the beginning of each letter; Ziemann 288-290.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. Exler 101-113.

media regarding their selection of a bishop this sort of salutation occurs in the form of a rather long prayer obviously imitative of the salutations of St. Paul's epistles.¹⁷⁰ Most of St. Gregory's letters—like many of those of St. Basil, St. Gregory Nazianzen, and Theodoret, for instance—do not follow this convention. Instead of the brief conventional formula they tend to commence with an elaborate, formal, often graceful, introductory paragraph, a feature of epistolary structure which their author uses with very evident deliberation. In one instance he declares frankly that he had considerable difficulty in finding a suitable introduction for his letter, since he wished to find one pleasing to the taste of his correspondent.¹⁷¹ His proems are never inept, but curiously enough the transition to the body of the letter is frequently stilted. So much is this so, that the awkward *τί μοι βούλεται, κ.τ.λ.*, with which he so often naively marks the end of his introduction and the commencement of the body of the letter, has come to be regarded as a characteristic feature of his style.¹⁷² There are eight letters in which such an awkward transition is made, though in every instance the proem is well chosen and handled with skilled delicacy.¹⁷³ This "awkwardness" may have proceeded from a rather over-subtle desire to give an impression of erudition in the *τεχνή* of epistolography or may be simply due to the influence of contemporary rhetoric in the pro-lalia, but it certainly cannot be attributed to inability to do otherwise. In at least nine instances where he uses an elaborate introduction the transition is effected cleverly and gracefully.¹⁷⁴

We may cite as typical of these Epistle VIII which is a letter of recommendation. A young man named Alexander is being introduced, so St. Gregory opens the letter with a reference to Alex-

¹⁷⁰ Ep. XVII P 49, 3-13.

¹⁷¹ Ep. XI P 38,20 - 39,2.

¹⁷² It is one of the decisive factors in determining the authenticity of a portion of his correspondence. Cf. Maas 998-999; Pasquali SIFC 99 ff.

¹⁷³ Epp. IV VII IX XI XII XIV XXI XXVIII.

¹⁷⁴ Epp. III VIII X XIII XVI XVIII XIX XXII XXIV. St. Gregory Nazianzen excels in making a smooth transition from the proem to the body of the letter, while Libanius does not succeed well in doing so. Cf. Guignet 41 and 65 ff.

ander the Great. The latter, he says, was admired not so much because of his victories over the Persians and Indians as for saying that he had his treasure in his friends. St. Gregory is rich in friendships and in this one respect, he goes on to say, he possibly surpasses Alexander. His correspondent is one of the most valued of his friends. He hopes that his other friend, Alexander, will be for his sake befriended by the recipient of the letter.¹⁷⁵

On the other hand, nine letters lack such a formal introduction and commence almost abruptly, but more in the manner of a typical friendly letter of to-day. Epistle I, for example, commences, "My affairs, man of God, are not in a good way."¹⁷⁶ Epistle II, "Inasmuch as you made inquiry, my friend, in your letter, I consider it fitting to reply to you about everything in order."¹⁷⁷ St. Gregory makes no apology for the omission of the formal proemium and since other epistolographers, roughly contemporaneous with him,¹⁷⁸ manifest a similar freedom in its use or omission, it would seem that the nature of the letter and the personal choice of the author in each case might determine the procedure in the fourth century. The introduction and use of the formal proemium in the polished letter probably reflects the rhetorical tradition relative to the exordium of a speech, a subject with which the cultured epistolographer was thoroughly conversant.¹⁷⁹

The conclusions of St. Gregory's *Letters* follow a pattern similar to that of the introductions. The tendency predominates either to substitute for the closing *ἀσπασσάσθαι* formula traditionally in vogue¹⁸⁰ an elegantly studied conclusion in the manner of the epilogue of a speech, or to end the letter rather abruptly with no formal apodosis. Two letters only have preserved a closing phrase of a stereotyped character and this is plainly an expansion of the concluding formula *ἔρρωσο*: "May the Lord preserve you in His Church vigorous in soul and body."¹⁸¹ A few epistles close with a

¹⁷⁵ P 35-36.

¹⁷⁶ P 1, 3-4.

¹⁷⁷ P 11, 3-4. Cf. also Epp. V VI XV XX XXV XXVI XXVII XXIX.

¹⁷⁸ e.g., St. Basil, St. Gregory Nazianzen, Libanius, Theodoret.

¹⁷⁹ For a good discussion of the types of proems and their relation with contemporary rhetoric cf. Wagner.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. Exler 116.

¹⁸¹ Ep. XXIX P 86, 12-13; cf. Ep. III P 25, 14-17.

prayer or pious wish,¹⁸² and several others with a scriptural reference,¹⁸³ both varieties apparently strongly influenced by the formulaic closing phrase.

Much more commonly, however, an epilogue of the rhetorical type, instead of a conventional formula, concludes St. Gregory's letters. Usually it is a careful and elegant epitome of the content of the letter,¹⁸⁴ sometimes conjoined with a pious wish.¹⁸⁵ In one instance an aphorism is cleverly used to recapitulate in brief the thought of the letter.¹⁸⁶ One friendly letter ends simply with an informal allusion to the circumstances under which it was written in haste after a journey without the author's even having taken time to refresh himself.¹⁸⁷

Only one of the *Letters* in the collection—and that the epistle of his brother Peter to our author—has the customary concluding formula ἔρρωσο, i. e., "Farewell."¹⁸⁸

The *Letters* of St. Gregory thus make it plain that a certain freedom in external form was consonant with the epistolary norms of his day and that the tradition of the oration seems to have prevailed over the tradition of the letter in epistolography. They also attest that he shared the activity of contemporary letter-writers who vied in imparting elegance of style to all types of letters. For instance, he assures a correspondent that his recent letter has unfolded to him a whole spring-time of eloquence.¹⁸⁹ In the interests of eloquence he and his associates exploited to the full the devices ready at hand from their rhetorical training, such as the tasteful introduction of aphorisms, classical quotations, and rhetorical figures.¹⁹⁰ Rhetorical training likewise fructified in careful attention to *πρέπον* and *ἡθος* in proportioning the style to the subject-

¹⁸² Epp. I XIX XXI XXII XXV.

¹⁸³ Epp. II V XVI XVII XXIV.

¹⁸⁴ Epp. IX X XI XV XX XXVIII.

¹⁸⁵ Epp. IV XII XVIII.

¹⁸⁶ Ep. XIII P 44, 4-5. The use of proverbs and apothegms to impart elegance of style was counseled by Demetrius and St. Gregory Nazianzen. Cf. Pasquali SIFC 105; "Epistolographie" PW Suppl. V 190.

¹⁸⁷ Ep. VI.

¹⁸⁸ Ep. XXX. Cf. Ziemann 356 ff.

¹⁸⁹ Ep. XXVIII P 83, 6-10.

¹⁹⁰ St. Gregory, however, sometimes goes to excess in his use of rhetorical figures. Cf. pp. 106 ff. *infra*.

matter and the addressee.¹⁹¹ St. Gregory excels in this regard, as may be readily seen by comparing his clever reply to Stagirus which faithfully reproduces the playful tone of the sophist's letter, with the dignified restraint of the letter of admonition against undue participation by ascetics in pilgrimages to the Holy Land, or again the fulsome ecphrasis of the epistle describing the estate at Vanota.¹⁹² Examples of like tenor might easily be multiplied.

A letter thus meticulously adorned often became for these connoisseurs of style a treasured gift, and we find St. Gregory illustrating this topos of the day more than once in the *Letters*.¹⁹³

Frequently, however, catering to another literary convention, he endeavors to give an impression of artlessness to productions which show every indication of painstaking composition. He concludes one of the most elaborate of his epistles, for example, the account of his visit to Vanota, by declaring that he carelessly tossed it off to his secretary as he sat in pleasant drowsiness after a repast.¹⁹⁴

It may be noted that St. Gregory makes the frequent use of conventional titles characteristic of the writers of his time. My findings in this respect simply corroborate those of Dinneen.¹⁹⁵

The chief conclusion that emerges from St. Gregory's testimony to fourth century epistolography is that, like other contemporary ecclesiastics, recognizing the fertile possibilities of the letter as a vehicle for the exchange and promulgation of thought and doctrine, he made large use of it, employing the mode of expression currently acceptable to the cultured, a form which though artificial was a natural outgrowth of a decadent age. The epistolary genre illustrates very well the fact exemplified also by other literary types that the distinction between Christian and pagan Greek literature in the fourth century, which makes for the Golden Age of the one and the age of decadence of the other, is precisely that of content, for both had recourse to the same canons of form.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹¹ Cf. "Epistolographie" PW Suppl. V 194-195.

¹⁹² Epp. XXVII XX II. Cf. Pasquali SIFC 105.

¹⁹³ Ep. XIV P 44, 16-26, Ep. IV *passim*. Cf. Fox 56; Demetrius (ed Hercher) 13. Wagner.

¹⁹⁴ Ep. XX P 70, 2-3. Cf. Pasquali SIFC 126.

¹⁹⁵ Cf. esp. 105-106.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. "Epistolographie" PW Suppl. V 219.

Besides the evidence relative to the social and intellectual aspect of epistolography as developed in the preceding pages, the *Letters* also contain a few incidental allusions to the mechanics of letter-writing in St. Gregory's day. It was the usual custom for men of his class to dictate letters to secretaries,¹⁹⁷ and in one instance he explicitly mentions the fact that he dictated a letter. During his visit at Vanota, immediately after the repast when he was feeling somewhat drowsy, he says, "having placed beside me my stenographer, I tossed off this letter to your Eloquence as if in a dream."¹⁹⁸ In but one other letter he specifically mentions the circumstances under which it was composed, but does not make it absolutely clear whether or not it was dictated.¹⁹⁹

We have his own testimony elsewhere that he was not always able to secure the services of a secretary. He explains the tardy appearance of the *Contra Eunomium* by mentioning the scarcity of scribes in Cappadocia. Now that he has obtained one the work is ready. He does not say, however, whether the letter giving this information was dictated.²⁰⁰

In one letter he mentions the materials used for letter-writing, that is, a kind of paper made of papyrus (charta) and inscribed with ink which were the materials then commonly used, as other sources attest.²⁰¹

E. MANNERS

1. In General

Incidental references in the *Letters* and in the *Contra Eunomium* throw into clearer light the customs and manners of the fourth

¹⁹⁷ Cf. Keenan 30, 63; Pando 61; Fox 60, etc.

¹⁹⁸ Ep. XX P 70, 1-3.

¹⁹⁹ Ep. VI P 34, 2-3. The use of the verb *διεχάραξα* here is in distinct contrast to *ἀπηλήρησα* of the preceding passage and may indicate that in this instance it was the bishop himself who actually wrote the letter.

²⁰⁰ Ep. XV P 46, 14-21. Cf. also p. 29 *supra*.

²⁰¹ Ep. XX P 70, 4-6. Cf. "Papyrus" DACL XIII 1371-1375; also Keenan 63-64, and Fox 58-59, for corroboration of this together with some unusual departures from it.

He also mentions writing-tablets used for copying or for jotting down notes: Ep. XIV P 45, 3 and J I 65, 3-4.

century. In this lies the merit of the apparently trivial—even banal—bits of information which have been assembled in this section. Their value as evidence is mainly in corroborating what other sources have told us and in interpreting the attitude and point of view of the masses whose significant, if obscure, role in the history of a period is too often passed over in silence.

St. Gregory is incidentally alluding to them when he says, "It is not easy to find those with whom we may share our blessings, but of those who are not well off, there is much abundance."²⁰² From scattered references we can put together a mosaic representing the simple, often boorish, folk who formed the larger part of the population of Cappadocia and its environs in his day. Because of their gullibility they were easily imposed upon by such demagogues as Aëtius and his pupil Eunomius who obtained, as St. Gregory tells us, "a fat living" by duping the simple people.²⁰³

The artificiality and concentration on form at the expense of meaning which characterized the cultured classes in the fourth-century, especially among pagans, had its repercussions in the common folk as well.²⁰⁴ Teachers like Aëtius and Eunomius, ranting empty words 'full of sound and fury,' tickled the novelty-loving ears of their Anatolian audiences whose coarse manners but reflected this lack of intellectual discernment.²⁰⁵ The rude villagers who surrounded St. Gregory during his humiliating visit to Bishop Helladius added no little to his discomfiture by staring, pointing fingers, and audibly discussing him.²⁰⁶ A sensitive soul like St. Gregory found this especially trying. He complains of similar conduct on the part of those who were his neighbors during a period of enforced exile from Nyssa. They watch his voice, and look, and the way he casts his cloak about him, the movement of

²⁰² Ep. VII P 34, 8-13.

²⁰³ J I 38, 9-13. That the people did at times, however, see through their tricks and even prosecute the malefactors is attested by the story of the fraud practiced upon a woman by Aëtius. J I 33,16 - 34,5. Cf. Chapter I note 138 *supra*.

²⁰⁴ Cf. Campbell 16.

²⁰⁵ J I 35, 15-17.

²⁰⁶ Ep. I P 3,28 - 4,1.

his hands and feet, his breathing, his manner of adjusting his clothing. They criticize all these openly and with malevolence.²⁰⁷ These, of course, were men who were inimical to the Bishop of Nyssa, but that fact does not make their conduct any less boorish.

Commonly not only enemies but also friends openly displayed their feelings in a very demonstrative fashion. For instance, when the people of Sebastea came to ask St. Gregory to help them in the crisis which ensued upon the death of their bishop, there were in evidence, he tells us, ". . . tears, prostrations, groans, supplications, all such things."²⁰⁸ Then too, he describes the touching display of emotion by the people along the way as he returned to his see after a long absence. "The whole road was filled with men, some of them coming to meet us and others escorting us in an unbroken line, mingling much weeping with their joy."²⁰⁹

An interesting reference indicates what were the social amenities of greeting. Such expressions were generally used as, "Welcome" or "Whence come you?" or "To what do I owe the pleasure of this visit?"²¹⁰

2. Attitude to Miscellaneous Features of Fourth Century Life

The general attitude to various aspects of social life is incidentally betrayed by scattered casual references. One allusion, for instance, concerns the attitude toward superiors. Those who were in authority possessed a hierarchy of rank and received accordingly varying degrees of honor and respect from their inferiors. The degree of reverence shown a man is the gauge of the dignity of his rank, St. Gregory tells us.²¹¹

Several references point to the loyalty of kinsmen and of fel-

²⁰⁷ Ep. XVIII P 58,6 - 59,10. Just where St. Gregory was at this time is not clear. It may have been the period of his exile under Valens. Pasquali, SIFC 67-87, is convinced rather that this letter refers to the sojourn at Sebastea.

²⁰⁸ Ep. XIX P 64, 2-4.

²⁰⁹ Ep. VI P 33, 4-7. Possibly this was after his exile. Cf. Chap. I note 16 *supra*.

²¹⁰ More literally, "For what reason have you come? Is it a social call, or what is it that is responsible for your presence?" Ep. I P 5, 4-9.

²¹¹ J I 119,26 - 120,6.

low countrymen to one another.²¹² In one case, however, we perceive that business was business even among relatives. Eunomius in the early part of his career boarded with relatives, but paid for his keep by acting as a scribe and by teaching the children of the household.²¹³

From certain allusions we can by implication obtain some notion of the general attitude toward women. St. Gregory speaks in admiration of the power of endurance which women possess. He declares that, notwithstanding the comparative weakness of their sex, they are apt to manifest a striking degree of endurance when put to the test.²¹⁴

Then as now it was a term of reproach for a man to be labeled as womanish. Those who listen with pleasure to Eunomius' rantings are called "the old hags among our men."²¹⁵ Again, it would be unworthy of a "superannuated prize-fighter to play the woman by excessive care in the adornment of his person," St. Gregory declares.²¹⁶

There are some proverbial allusions to the inane garrulity of old women,²¹⁷ references which testify to the casual use of an ancient and uncharitable common-place by a fourth century bishop. "The great apostle forbids us to approve the babbling of old hags," he tells us.²¹⁸ Some men have their title to fame only from wretched old hags, and spend their time deceiving "silly women who readily fall prey to every sort of deception."²¹⁹ Old women are prone to idle talk, jest with little children, and interpret the meaning of dreams, again asserts the bishop.²²⁰ Their tales are not worth much nor their dreams, he declares.²²¹ Eunomius' "crossroad jests" are

²¹² J I 34, 5-9; 36, 6-9. But cf. his account of the strife between kinsmen in Jerusalem Ep. II P 14, 11-15.

²¹³ J I 37, 1-4.

²¹⁴ J I 63, 20-22.

²¹⁵ J I 317, 20. Cf. also 391, 15-16; J II 194, 4-5; and 197, 7-10.

²¹⁶ J I 252, 8-9.

²¹⁷ For an interesting and well documented monograph on and around this subject cf. Richardson *passim*. Here especially p. 29.

²¹⁸ J II 147, 10-11. Cf. Tim. IV, 7.

²¹⁹ J I 66, 9-11.

²²⁰ J I 89, 1-3; J II 147, 6-9.

²²¹ J I 298, 12-13 and 20-21.

of low type, lacking in grace, and not at all different from the mutterings of "some old woman who is quite drunk and mumbling under her tooth."²²²

Besides these references to aged women old age in general is referred to more than once. An allusion in the *Letters* tells us that to prate idly is just as characteristic of old age as for the eyes to grow bleary and all the limbs to grow heavy because of the feebleness of age.²²³ In contrast to these uncomplimentary and traditional clichés an attitude of reverence and respect toward old age is also attested. Old age has a natural physical weakness, but still for an old man to make ridiculous and ignoble utterances and to be contentious in his speech is extremely unbecoming the dignity of gray hair, our author tells us.²²⁴ The respect due the aged is implied in the fact that St. Gregory makes it more blameworthy in Eunomius that he has written abusively of gray-haired priests. It would have been wrong of him to abuse priests but his guilt was aggravated by the fact that the objects of his scorn were not only priests but aged as well.²²⁵

In contrast to the picture of the depleted vigor of the aged just mentioned is the enumeration of details which were evidently the criteria of physical beauty and were regarded with an attitude of admiration. St. Gregory sets them forth in one of the letters. He mentions shining golden hair curled upon the forehead, lips red as a rose, flushed cheeks, bright eyes, eyebrows glistening with black coloring, alabaster brow, and the like.²²⁶ Though St. Gregory in neither the *Letters* nor the *Contra Eunomium* inveighs against the use of cosmetics, he does imply in one instance that he considers as superficial the use of what some of his contemporaries seem to have deemed aids to beauty, such as rouge.²²⁷

In several interesting instances allusion is made to little children by way of comparison. These seem to point to the conclusion that

²²² J I 51, 10-13. Cf. Jaeger's note on line 4.

²²³ Ep. XI P 40, 10-12.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*; J I 385, 20-23.

²²⁵ J I 30, 3-4.

²²⁶ Ep. XIX P 60, 8-14.

²²⁷ J I 25, 25 - 26, 5. The writings of the Fathers are frequently directed against the fads and adornment of women. Cf. Fox 25-28; Keenan 57-58; Clem. Alex. *Paedagogus*, *passim*.

this fourth century bishop had an interested attitude toward children and was a delighted and careful observer of their ways.²²⁸ Sometimes, he tells us, little children

thinking that the stars are a little above their heads, cast clods at them with childish folly when they appear; then when the clod falls back, with clapping and laughter they boast to their companions as if their throw had reached to the very stars.²²⁹

When little children at play build houses in the sand they do not make a plan first, he observes, but build at haphazard and then assign a name to the structure when the work is finished.²³⁰ Again, oftentimes little children, charmed with the beauty of a sunbeam which streams down upon them through a window,

throw themselves upon what appears and strive to catch the beams in their hand, and contest with one another, and grasp the light with their clutching fingers. Having caught the beam as they think, when the clasp of their fingers has been loosed, the captured beam, slipping through their hands, makes the children laugh and clap.²³¹

The attitude of some of his contemporaries toward certain professions and trades as attested by St. Gregory is interesting. The teachings and example of Christ had dignified manual labor so that other sources indicate that by the fourth century the attitude of Christians toward it was generally favorable.²³² However, the traditional prejudice of Greek and Roman antiquity against those engaged in manual toil, except agriculture, seems to have persisted to some extent at least.²³³ At any rate, St. Gregory is ostensibly appealing to such an attitude when, with a view to discredit-

²²⁸ St. Augustine likewise betrays that he keenly observed small children. *Conf.* I 7-8.

²²⁹ J II 157, 29 - 158, 5.

²³⁰ J II 236, 23-29. Cf. also J I 347, 15-17.

²³¹ J I 239, 13-22. Other instances: J I 46, 25-27; J II 78, 3-6.

²³² Geoghegan 229-232.

²³³ On the history of the crafts and the attitude of ancient Greek and Roman society toward them cf. "Artifices" DS I 411. Also Friedländer I 154-156; Michell 9-19.

ing Aëtius, quondam teacher of Eunomius, he recalls that he was at one time

a smith who was engaged in that scorching and vulgar trade, sitting near his small hammer and little anvil under a tent made of hair, scantily and laboriously procuring the necessities of life through this toil. For, what pay worth mentioning could accrue to one who mends the corroded parts of copper vessels and stops up little holes and softens tin by hammering and fixes with lead the legs of cauldrons?²³⁴

On the other hand, he includes in the evidence he cites of Eunomius' complete worthlessness the fact that he left his father's farm in order to escape the hard labor that would have been his if he had remained there. He thus implies that his contemporaries had an attitude toward agricultural toil different from that which they felt toward some other kinds of manual labor. He declares that Eunomius' defection from the ranks of agriculture was due to his

having perceived that (his father's) way of life was honest and respectable, to be sure, but toilsome because of poverty and full of numberless labors, for he was a farmer bent over the plow and expending much toil over his little plot of land. . . .

The matter of fact tone assumes that farming was still regarded in that day and place as an honest and respectable occupation, an attitude that had prevailed almost universally throughout antiquity.²³⁵

The lowliness traditionally associated with the occupation of goatherd, fisherman, tent-maker, and tax-gather in earlier antiquity persists in St. Gregory's lone reference to them.²³⁶ The fact that he is referring to the original occupation of prophets and apostles probably robs it of any significance as to underlying contemporary attitudes since this sort of allusion had become common-

²³⁴ J I 33, 7-15. Cf. Geoghegan 15.

²³⁵ J I 36, 14-25. On the traditionally favorable ancient Greek attitude toward farming cf. Geoghegan 27-30.

²³⁶ Ep. XVII P 51,26 - 52,3.

place in Christian writings. In the same reference, however, his statement that the apostles and prophets were poor men of lowly pursuits not "consuls or generals or praetorian prefects, or men notable for rhetoric and philosophy" implies that he and his audience looked upon the latter as honorable offices.

The normal attitude toward the sick and those suffering from any bodily affliction was one of pity.²³⁷ Bodily ailments, such as halitosis or maimed limbs, were considered as misfortunes of nature by intelligent persons, not as deserving censure, the saint tells us,²³⁸ implying by his statement that not everyone so regarded them in his day.

St. Gregory betrays an interesting attitude toward the opinion of the majority. He implies that the accepted notion was that it ought to be a decisive factor in controversial matters, for he criticizes Eunomius severely for opposing the opinion of the majority.²³⁹

St. Gregory represents Eunomius as using a great deal of invective in his writings especially against St. Basil and against the Bishop of Nyssa himself. That such language was not objectionable to many people of his day, but rather was expected in controversial writings, is implied when he declares that someone may say that the Bishop of Nyssa begs off from being abusive because he lacks the ability to pay back like for like. The saint goes on to say that he designedly refrains from using such abusive language because it may be an occasion of sin. But in the next breath he adroitly secures the effect of language of that kind on his audience by saying that the heretic's abuse of St. Basil is much more applicable to Eunomius himself. He then appends a long list of those abusive epithets which Eunomius had used against St. Basil but which, he says, Eunomius deserves far more.²⁴⁰

Besides throwing light on the fourth century appreciation of invective the references to abusive language, explicit as they are, give a good notion of what epithets were commonly considered

²³⁷ J II 194, 17-18.

²³⁸ J I 388, 27-31.

²³⁹ J I 45, 5-12; 51,25 - 52,3.

²⁴⁰ J I 49,24 - 50,3. The list fills ten lines of Jaeger's text: I 50, 19-29. Cf. also 191, 6-9.

most offensive, and consequently indicate what was the general attitude toward certain occupations and qualities. It is blameworthy to be "foolish" and "fail in correct reasoning" and make an ill-prepared speech;²⁴¹ also to be hasty and unstable in opinion.²⁴² Eunomius "dares to call the great Basil 'wicked' and 'malicious' and 'lying' . . . 'bold' 'ignorant' . . . and he adds to the list of abusive terms even 'madness' and 'insanity.'" ²⁴³

One quality which especially served the purposes of abuse was cowardice.²⁴⁴ Other qualities provocative of invective were cunning, quarrelsomeness, cheating, obduracy, shamelessness, lack of reverence; impracticability, sloth.²⁴⁵

For priests to be called ὑπασπιστὰς καὶ ῥαβδούχους καὶ δορυφόρους²⁴⁶ was an insult and this implies that these terms suggested uncomplimentary connotations to at least some elements of the public who formed Eunomius' audience. All three terms have a common denominator in that they denote one or other variety of bodyguard attached to important personages in the Late Empire, an office which came to be associated more and more with obsequious, or at best subservient, satellites.²⁴⁷

That it was a term of reproach for a priest to be styled, according to St. Gregory, "gray-cloaked soldier"²⁴⁸ seems to reflect a contemporary attitude of disapproval of soldiery which probably stemmed from the traditional hostility of the provincial for the occupying garrison.²⁴⁹ In a similar vein, in an effort to disparage those who are deserting the Greek language for another in his day, St. Gregory compares them to mercenary soldiers.²⁵⁰

²⁴¹ J I 204,29 - 205,3.

²⁴² J I 174, 2-5.

²⁴³ J I 44, 17-23.

²⁴⁴ J I 59, 6-14; 62, 3-5; 64, 15-16; 66, 8-9.

²⁴⁵ J I 59, 6-14; 62, 3-5; J II 141, 18-20; and 111, 13-16.

²⁴⁶ J I 30, 1-2.

²⁴⁷ The subsequent history of the terms δορυφόροι and ὑπασπίσται would bear this out. Cf. Grosse 283-291. The term ῥαβδούχοι was regularly used of the Roman lictors, attendants who accompanied Roman magistrates in public not only in Rome but in the provinces in the fourth century. Cf. "Lictor" DS III 1239-1242; "Rhabdouchoi" DS IV 860-861.

²⁴⁸ J I 30, 13-14.

²⁴⁹ Cf. Rostovtzeff (1) II 323-333.

²⁵⁰ Ep. XIV P 45, 15-18.

The epithet "gray-cloaked" applied to the abusive term "soldier" as above would be synonymous with "philosopher" to the mind of the day, for traditionally philosophers were distinguished by wearing a gray cloak. The allusion in this instance may be a flaring up of the centuries old feud between philosophers and rhetors since it is Eunomius the rhetor who is responsible for it.²⁵¹

Epistle II which warns against undue esteem for making pilgrimages to the Holy Land betrays the fact that many of St. Gregory's contemporaries, particularly ascetics, were prone to attribute an exaggerated value to such pilgrimages. He himself went to visit the Holy Places but only in fulfillment of the duties of his office. He remarks prosaically that the only lasting profit from the trip was the realization that he could worship God just as well at home.²⁵²

We have interesting sidelights on the fourth century attitude to some nationalities. St. Gregory refers specifically to the fact that Galatia was held in bad repute.²⁵³ In the *Contra Eunomium* an Armenian is represented as being easily duped by Aëtius into having the latter as his physician at an excessive fee. The fact is noteworthy considering that even from antiquity Armenians are reputed to be very shrewd. St. Gregory appears to realize that this Armenian was an exception to the rule, when he explains parenthetically that it was because of being a stranger that the Armenian was easily deceived.²⁵⁴

Several references attest that there was a pronounced cleavage between the classes in that segment of fourth century society in which St. Gregory moved. He declares that to human eyes a man seems weak because of poverty, or ignoble on account of meanness of birth. "But who knows," he continues, "whether the horn of anointing does not reside in such a man" who seems rather insignificant compared with men of high estate? He goes on to say

²⁵¹ Cf. Diels 254-255.

²⁵² Ep. II P 16, 6-8. Cf. pp. 43-44 *supra*.

²⁵³ Cf. p. 49 *supra*.

²⁵⁴ J I 34, 16-18. Cf. Ramsay (4) 216; Tozer, *Turkish Armenia and Eastern Asia Minor*, 193. The Cappadocians, however, were their rivals in this respect even in antiquity. Recall the fragment of Demodocus which purports to tell of a snake which died after biting a Cappadocian! Cf. Demodocus *Fr.* 3; cf. *Fr.* 4; Bergk II 442-443.

that true worth is to be found in the virtue which one shows in his life, and not in those accidentals on which a man may mistakenly plume himself as friends, and lists of dignities, and yearly revenues, and ancestry. If a man boasts of such things he should be passed over "as a dry aqueduct," he declares.²⁵⁵

Despite the lofty attitude which St. Gregory here claims as his own in contrast to that which he concedes to many of his contemporaries, some of their hauteur is discernible in his scornful allusions to the humble beginnings of Aëtius.²⁵⁶ There may be further evidence of the same sort of thing in the allusion which he makes in another context to the subtle distinction between the Cappadocians who like himself spoke Greek, and those who spoke a local language.²⁵⁷

From the very casual character of two allusions made to beggars in the *Contra Eunomium* we may infer that many of St. Gregory's contemporaries accepted as commonplace the existence of a class of people who were forced to eke out a living by collecting their food, bit by bit, from nondescript sources, and by sewing rags together into a semblance of clothing.²⁵⁸ St. Basil, on the contrary, so his brother admiringly states, spent his patrimony unsparingly to help the poor especially during the time of famine when he was administering the affairs of the Church.²⁵⁹

F. DWELLINGS, FOOD, CLOTHING, ETC.

The most detailed references to dwellings occur in Epistle XX. As mentioned above, St. Gregory describes therein the estate of Vanota with its various buildings, and in particular the portico with its unique fish-pool and dining-room.²⁶⁰ The luxury of country villas and their popularity under the Empire is well-known, but it is doubtful that they were common in fourth century Cappadocia. That at Vanota is a curiosity to the Bishop of Nyssa who in his

²⁵⁵ Ep. XVII P 52, 13-18; P 55, 6-11.

²⁵⁶ Cf. p. 72 *supra*.

²⁵⁷ J I 330, 3-9. Cf. p. 125 *infra*.

²⁵⁸ J I 329, 26-32; and 252, 1-3.

²⁵⁹ J I 53, 9-11.

²⁶⁰ Ep. XX *passim* esp. P 68, 2-7 and 69, 9-19. For discussion of its architectural features, etc., cf. pp. 27-28 *supra*.

travels surely would have been familiar with this type of country estate if there were many of them.²⁶¹

A few minor details of home-life can be assembled. Fire, for instance, it is not surprising to learn, was made either by striking sparks from stone or metal, or by rubbing sticks together to generate heat by friction.²⁶²

The method of telling time was that of the Romans. St. Gregory speaks of something as happening at the first hour of the day; when the time was approaching noon; when the time was more than the sixth hour; and "about late afternoon."²⁶³ There is one reference to "the marvels of clocks, both made of bronze and of water."²⁶⁴

Hospitality was sometimes given by a man to parasites whom he made his followers.²⁶⁵

Several references to food occur.²⁶⁶ Of these the most significant for our purpose is the account of the mid-day meal served to St. Gregory during his visit to Vanota. It included fruits, meats, sweet-meats and wine.²⁶⁷

Allusions to clothing are not numerous. In one interesting passage he mentions as parts of his own clothing the tunic with its girdle, and two kinds of cloaks, the pallium (ἱμάτιον) and the

²⁶¹ Pasquali, who regards Ep. XX as a mere exercise of "ecphrasis," yet feels that the letter betrays the fact that the Cappadocians had borrowed the luxury of Roman villas. He places the portico by a lake, and interprets the whole description on a much grander scale than the text seems to justify. Cf. SIFC 125-128. Müller, 77, on the other hand, presents convincing arguments to prove that Vanota was executed on a much smaller scale. This view is supported by the evidence presented by Rostovtzeff and others of the backwardness and poverty of the central portion of Asia Minor, where Galatia and Cappadocia were located, up to the end of the third century. We have no evidence that conditions improved so radically during the ensuing century as to make likely the presence of such extravagances as a large number of elaborate villas. Cf. Rostovtzeff (2) 239; ESAR 690; chap. I note 35 *supra*.

²⁶² J I 249, 10-13.

²⁶³ Ep. I P 3, 12; P 4, 8; P 8, 11; 24-25.

²⁶⁴ J I 265, 13.

²⁶⁵ J I 36, 5-6.

²⁶⁶ Ep. I P 8, 11-12; J I 23, 3-4; 180, 6-10; 232, 4-9.

²⁶⁷ Ep. XX P 69, 32-35.

double cloak (διπλόις).²⁶⁸ He refers once to the gray cloak traditionally worn by philosophers.²⁶⁹

There are several casual allusions to household furnishings, such as benches, wine-jars, and mirrors.²⁷⁰

G. AMUSEMENTS AND SPORTS

In the *Contra Eunomium* there are scattered references to wrestling which may or may not imply fourth century Cappadocian familiarity with the sport by experience, since the length and arduous character of this polemic make it doubtful that it appealed to a wide audience.²⁷¹

One reference gives a picture of contests in wrestling similar to that of sport meets to-day. They are held in an amphitheater (στάδια). Some men are employed in arranging the contests. The contestants strip and engage one another. The audience takes sides and each spectator cheers for his favorite contestant. In the time-honored fashion of sport fans they egg on their favorite to guard against a grip, or to recall a trick of wrestling, or to use his skill to prevent his opponent from throwing him.²⁷² The umpires assigned the victor's crown to the contestant whose opponent had either yielded, worn out by his struggles, or else had been thrown three times.²⁷³ Clever wrestlers endeavored to obtain an irresistible hold

²⁶⁸ Ep. XVIII P 58,24 - 59,6. For a discussion of the probable appearance and use of these cf. Wilson's excellent monograph chapters VI-IX, 76-129, esp. 112-129. For the tunic, 71. Cf. also Blümner 217-218.

²⁶⁹ J I 30, 13. Cf. Diels 254-255. Other references to clothing of a merely casual sort: J I 134, 31; 252, 2. A woman's ornament is mentioned once: J I 33, 17-18.

²⁷⁰ J I 151, 18; 282, 25-26; J II 32, 27; 72, 16-17. Ep. XIX P 60, 29-30; J I 275, 25.

²⁷¹ The use of metaphors based on various sports and athletic contests is, of course, a common-place from the time of St. Paul on. Its persistence implies at least the continuance of interest in amusements common in cities of the Roman Empire. Cf. Thorndike 486-487.

²⁷² J II 387, 8-17.

²⁷³ J II 1, 1-8. There is another allusion to the crown awarded to the victor and the rule that being thrown three times decided the loser of the contest, J II 2, 11-19.

on their opponents.²⁷⁴ One powerful hold was around the waist.²⁷⁵ Contestants were expected to challenge only those who were nearly their equals in skill and size. Men who grappled with mere youths won blame rather than praise for winning the contest.²⁷⁶ There is one rather vague reference to boxing.²⁷⁷

Allusions to drunkenness and drinking bouts occur with some frequency in the *Contra Eunomium*, and merely confirm what we know from other sources of the widespread prevalence of the evil in the fourth century.²⁷⁸ By way of illustration St. Gregory describes the dizziness resulting from intoxication when the roof seems to be below the feet and the pavement above the head.

Men who are top-heavy from drink have this delusion, and they shout out and stoutly maintain that the earth is not fixed in place, and the walls are running away, and everything is moving around in a circle, and that the things they see have no fixed place.²⁷⁹

Other results of drunkenness to which St. Gregory alludes are wandering and confusion of mind²⁸⁰ and headache.²⁸¹

Drinking-parties or bouts were a common occurrence.²⁸² It was customary for the participants to tell stories, usually witty ones, which evoked laughter and applause from the besotted listeners.²⁸³ Allusion is made to the traditional practice of awarding a prize in a drinking-bout to the man who imbibed more unmixed wine than his companions. In this St. Gregory is plainly referring, as Jaeger thinks, to the rules for drinking in company laid down by some philosophers and literary men. Thus, possibly there is no allusion to a contemporary fourth century custom.²⁸⁴

²⁷⁴ J I 302, 5-6.

²⁷⁵ J I 346, 27-29.

²⁷⁶ J I 179, 1-4.

²⁷⁷ J I 84, 12-14.

²⁷⁸ Cf. Fox 90-94.

²⁷⁹ J I 161, 7-13. Cf. also J II 246, 28-30.

²⁸⁰ J I 305, 19-25; and 374, 25-27.

²⁸¹ J I 298, 20-22.

²⁸² J II 80, 9-10. Cf. also 78, 6.

²⁸³ J I 138, 2-3; 192, 26-27; 193, 18-21.

²⁸⁴ J I 57, 17-20, and 58, 5-8.

Some reference is also made in the *Letters* and the *Contra Eunomium* to other amusements and customs. The Romans of his time, St. Gregory tells us, celebrated a festival on the first of January. Taking an omen for the whole year from this day they made a practice of engaging in certain pursuits which they thought would bring good luck and which involved banqueting, carousals, and the exchange of gifts.²⁸⁵ Gifts were wrapped before being presented.²⁸⁶

The drama was still an important source of amusement. St. Gregory's references to tragedy are much more numerous than those to comedy.²⁸⁷

In a letter he describes the pantomimic performances so popular in his day, but the cautious "they say that" with which he prefaces the description makes it doubtful that he is speaking from first-hand observation. He mentions that in these performances the subject was usually historical or mythical, costumes and masks were worn, a scenic back-drop was used,²⁸⁸ there were several actors, and the action took place "on the orchestra." The latter observation is certainly interesting in the light of the history of the theater building in antiquity.²⁸⁹ In one instance St. Gregory appears to be alluding to the device used to portray the "deus ex machina" in the tragedy of the classical period. He tells that upon arriving at his own city after an absence, people appeared around his carriage to welcome him "as if from a sort of mechanical device."²⁹⁰ Tragedy is alluded to as dignified and stately.²⁹¹

In a satiric passage St. Gregory refers to processions which were a part of pagan festal celebrations, but as he follows Demosthenes rather closely in the context, it is likely that he is simply being rhetorical and not describing contemporary life.²⁹²

²⁸⁵ Ep. XIV P 44, 8-17.

²⁸⁶ Ep. IV P 26, 20-24.

²⁸⁷ Merely two insignificant allusions to the latter: J I 194, 7-8; and J II 195, 16-18.

²⁸⁸ Other references to stage properties: Masks, J I 63,30 - 64,1; 30, 17-18; Scenery 157, 20-22; Castanets, 25, 5-9.

²⁸⁹ Ep. IX P 36, 18 - 37,2.

²⁹⁰ Ep. VI P 33, 12-14.

²⁹¹ J I 29, 13-14; and 258, 11.

²⁹² J I 30-31. Cf. Dem. *de Falsa Legatione* 287; and *de Cor.* 122.

A casual reference to music tells us specifically that musicians in his day called the agreement in the sound of notes "harmony" and that which is out of tune and discordant, "inharmonious."²⁹³

Two casual allusions to musical instruments find their place here.²⁹⁴

A game of ball popular in the fourth century is described in detail. Four players take part. Three of them stand three-corner-wise while the fourth is in the center. His task is to try to catch the ball which the other three are throwing to one another. They toss it in no special order, but try to trick the fourth player by pretending to throw the ball in one direction while actually casting it in another.²⁹⁵

A method of snaring wild beasts, as St. Gregory describes it, is to dig deep pits and cover the mouths of them with materials which disguise them to look like the surrounding terrain. Animals, deceived by appearances, fall into the snare. The description may or may not refer to Cappadocian practice. The context does not allow us to be more definite. At any rate, the passage is interesting because of its coincidence with a method widely practiced in ancient times.²⁹⁶

H. THE ARMY AND WARFARE

It is well known that in the fourth century permanent garrisons were still maintained by Rome in the frontier provinces. St. Gregory may be alluding to soldiers from one of these garrisons in the following instance. According to him Aëtius cheated a woman of

²⁹³ J II 93, 25-28. The question of whether the modern sense of the word "harmony," meaning an agreement of simultaneous sounds, was known to the Greeks and Romans of the first centuries of our era has been much discussed. St. Gregory's reference is so casual as not to elucidate the question materially. The articles "Harmonie" in DACL VI 2053-2055, and "Musica" in DGRA 778-779 point to a negative conclusion, but cf. Gevaert I 357-358 for the contrary opinion.

²⁹⁴ J I 22, 25; and 271, 11.

²⁹⁵ Ep. XVI P 47, 13-20. Cf. "Ephetinda" DS II 647.

²⁹⁶ J II 89, 10-15. Cf. "Venatio" DS V 680-709, esp. 706. A method of snaring pigeons, as described by St. Gregory, has been discussed previously. Cf. pp. 12-14 *supra*.

the army of a golden ornament. Upon her discovery of the fraud certain soldiers, kinsfolk of hers, aided in bringing the thief to justice. Whether there was a legal trial or they dealt their own summary justice is not entirely clear from the context, though the language would point to the former procedure.²⁹⁷

Casual reference is made to what St. Gregory classifies as divisional and inferior officers (ἀρχαίς) of an army. He calls them ταξιάρχας ἑκατοντάρχους and χιλιάρχους,²⁹⁸ but whether he was actually referring to the tribuni legionis, centenarii, and tribuni militum which these terms respectively signified in his day,²⁹⁹ or was simply employing in a general manner the well-known nomenclature of the ancient Greek army cannot be determined with certainty. In one instance he uses the term στρατηλάται apparently meaning "commanders of armies."³⁰⁰ It is an interesting manifestation of his purism in language that in such matters he avoids using technical Latin terms or transliterating them into Greek.

By way of illustration he alludes in some detail several times to the tactics and strategic maneuvering of forces in battle, but the references are so stylized and the vocabulary so obviously that of the ancient Greek historians that it is impossible to conclude whether he had gained the information from first-hand observation and so was reflecting contemporary usage in warfare.³⁰¹

I. MISCELLANEOUS REFERENCES TO SOCIAL LIFE

Several miscellaneous references to social life, of no outstanding significance of themselves, are appended here for the sake of completeness.

Allusion is made to the circumstance that intimacy with the Emperors was considered a mark of distinction in fourth century society. Eunomius boasted, St. Gregory tells us, that he and his

²⁹⁷ J I 34, 5-9. Cf. chap. I note 138 *supra*. On the garrisons in the provinces cf. Bury I 35.

²⁹⁸ J I 111,23 - 112,2.

²⁹⁹ Cf. Grosse 146, 117-118; "Chiliarchus" DS I 1102.

³⁰⁰ Ep. XVII P 52, 4. The term actually corresponded to the magister militum. Cf. Grosse 183.

³⁰¹ J I 135, 3-4; 219, 10-17; J II 175, 7-10; Ep. XVIII P 58, 12-20.

followers were so well known and spoken of that they were even acquainted with Emperors.³⁰²

There are three brief references implying the existence of slavery in fourth century Cappadocia. This is not surprising—despite the general recession of slavery in the Late Empire—in the light of the well attested fact that during at least the first two centuries of our era slaves formed an important article of export from Cappadocia.³⁰³

The burial of the dead is attested in a casual allusion. "We hide in the ground clammy corpses in order that the stench may not be troublesome to many men."³⁰⁴

J. POLITICAL LIFE

St. Gregory, vigilant shepherd of his flock, is mainly preoccupied with things spiritual in the *Contra Eunomium* and his *Letters*, but sporadic references to political life do occur. They include allusions to the relations between Church and State in the fourth century, and to some personages and events in the political history of that time, as well as to civil administration and officials. Some few furnish source material for historians while the remainder, though somewhat trivial of themselves, have value in corroborating what we know from other sources.

1. Church and State

Throughout antiquity and well into the Middle Ages religion and government so thoroughly interpenetrated one another that there was not the sharp cleavage of our day between church and state. The divorce which developed between Christianity and the Roman Empire during the first three centuries of our era resulted from the fact that the refusal of Christians to worship the gods of Rome and in particular to adopt the cult of the Emperor was regarded by the state as a form of treason especially dangerous because proceeding from an increasingly large and well-organized

³⁰² J I 32, 9-12. Cf. Friedländer I 72.

³⁰³ J II 242, 16-18; 243, 24-27; Ep. XVII P 52, 22-23. Cf. ESAR 636.

³⁰⁴ J I 341, 3-5.

group. The Peace of Constantine removed the cause of this conflict and Christianity gradually became the sole official religion of the state. Nevertheless the religious outlook of the Emperor still remained of paramount importance, and during the fourth century the official status of the Church varied according to the religious beliefs of successive emperors.

Although the story of her vicissitudes during this period has been adequately treated more than once,³⁰⁵ a number of St. Gregory's allusions help to fill in the picture. These references are few but some are illuminating. Of the latter the most important are those referring to the persecution of the Church in the East by the Emperor Valens, for details of which the *Contra Eunomium* is a primary source and has been recognized as such by more than one historian dealing with the political aspect of that period in modern times.³⁰⁶

a. *Interference by the State in Church Affairs*

The fourth century was a troublous time for the newly emancipated Church, for despite the synod of Nicaea the Church continued to be rent by heresy, and the succession of emperors from Constantine to Theodosius did not universally subscribe to the creed of Nicaea nor protect its adherents. The formal recognition by Constantine of the orthodox Christian religion as his religion, and therefore that of the State, gained for the Church during his regime and intermittently thereafter the protection of the authority and the police power of the Roman Empire. But it entailed as well the government's claim to the reciprocal right of participating in the internal affairs of the Church.³⁰⁷

It was by imperial command that "the great Athanasius," as St. Gregory tells us, was removed from his bishopric at Alexandria and replaced by nominees of the heretical Emperor and his religious party.³⁰⁸ St. Gregory mentions disparagingly one of these,

³⁰⁵ Cf. esp. Duchesne, Kirsch, Fliche et Martin, Seeck. In its literary aspect: Bardenhewer, Puech.

³⁰⁶ Seeck V Anhang 459-460; Stein *Geschichte* I 270 ff.

³⁰⁷ Duchesne *Histoire* II *passim* esp. 518 ff.

³⁰⁸ J I 36, 2-3. Cf. Duchesne *ibid.*, 181-182.

the man who succeeded Athanasius during his second exile: George of Cappadocia. Aëtius, the patron of Eunomius, became a parasite of this George and thus obtained in Alexandria a position of comfort and influence for a time, St. Gregory declares.³⁰⁹

Interference in the election of bishops and in the appointment of other officials of the Church was a privilege to which the State increasingly laid claim. St. Gregory mentions the fact that one of the enticements employed to coerce orthodox Christians to conform to the tenets of a heretical emperor with regard to faith was that of being honored by the Emperor and receiving an ecclesiastical office.³¹⁰ Moreover there was still sufficient cause for being persecuted, exiled, or put to death by the civil government as a political menace if one persisted in a profession of faith different from that of the Emperor. When the latter happened to profess the orthodox belief (that of Nicaea) the Church found it helpful to have the police power of the Empire behind her in dealing with heretics. St. Gregory, for example, makes casual mention of the exiling of heretics by direction of the civil government because of their religious beliefs.³¹¹ But on the other hand, given an emperor of heretical or pagan belief, the Church in her turn became the persecuted.

St. Gregory writes in some detail of the persecution of the Church in the East by the Emperor Valens in his endeavor to force Arianism upon her. It took place, he says, when "the Emperor was going from Constantinople to the East, exalted in mind by his recent successes against the barbarians, and considering nothing strong enough to thwart his designs."³¹² And, he declares, Valens was no common antagonist but was backed up by all the power of Roman Empire.

Now, there were exiles and confiscations and banishments, threats and also punishments, menaces, arrests, imprisonments, blows,—and what most dreadful thing was not perpetrated against those who had not become conformed to the whim of the Emperor. Now it was more weighty

³⁰⁹ J I 36, 5-13. Cf. Duchesne *ibid.*, 265-268 and 277.

³¹⁰ J I 63, 1-3.

³¹¹ J I 31, 3-7. Cf. Fliche et Martin III 161.

³¹² J I 61, 15-25

for the pious to have been caught in the house of God than to be convicted of the most wicked of charges.³¹³

Valens was seconded in his efforts, St. Gregory declares, by a group of diplomatic and ambitious sycophants in the guise of officials, and everywhere he went he found additional adherents to fawn upon him and curry his favor by supporting whatever he said or did.³¹⁴ Among such subservient tools of Valens St. Gregory mentions especially Eudoxius of Germanicia³¹⁵ whom he credits with having won over Valens to the Arian heresy. He also notes a certain Demosthenes, who he states was formerly chief cook in the imperial kitchens, and whom Valens employed to assist him against St. Basil, St. Gregory, and the orthodox Christians of Cappadocia;³¹⁶ likewise Modestus, Praefectus Praetorio Orientis under Valens, similarly employed.³¹⁷

The majority of orthodox Christians were not intimidated by Valens and his satellites, St. Gregory tells us. He lauds in particular the staunchness of the people of Cappadocia in this time of trial,³¹⁸ and attributes much of their fortitude to the powerful example and inspiration of their leader and champion, his brother St. Basil. The latter boldly resisted the aggressions both of Modestus and of Valens, and won their respect to the extent that they desisted from their machinations against the faith in the region where he had jurisdiction.³¹⁹

³¹³ J I 59,25 - 60,17. Cf. also 65,19 - 66,2 where the geographic extent of the persecution is summarized in detail.

³¹⁴ J I 60, 4-11; cf. 61, 10-13; 65, 7-10.

³¹⁵ J I 60, 3-4. Cf. Jaeger's note ad loc.

³¹⁶ J I 64,27 - 65,9. Other sources tell us that Demosthenes was at that time Vicarius of the diocese of Pontus. Cf. Duchesne *Histoire* II 406-407; "Demosthenes" DCB I 813.

³¹⁷ J I 62, 18-21; cf. Jaeger's note ad loc. Cf. also J I 61, 15-25 and 65,6. Modestus was much impressed by the courage exhibited by St. Basil in withstanding the attack. He was later cured of a disease at the prayer of St. Basil and ended by being the Saint's friend and correspondent. Cf. "Modestus" (12) PW XV 2326.

³¹⁸ J I 66, 3-6.

³¹⁹ J I 59, 16-21; 65, 10-20. Cf. Kirsch I 409; Duchesne *Histoire* II 392-393; Fliche et Martin III 260-261. Seeck (V 80-81; Anhang 459-460) maintains that St. Basil was not yet a bishop at this time. He was at any rate acting in the name of the aged Bishop of Caesarea and received the fullness of episcopal power at latest in the following year.

b. Power of the Church in State Affairs

During the periods when the Church was in favor with the government ecclesiastical officials, especially bishops, had increasing political power and influence.³²⁰ One evidence of this is found in extant intercessory letters of which St. Gregory has two. In one he is exercising the power of intercession on behalf of a youthful friend named Synesius accused of an offence punishable by the death penalty.³²¹ In another he asks that his correspondent befriend a young man named Alexander in regard to certain matters which he does not elucidate for reasons of prudence.³²²

The fact of the increasing prestige of Christian Bishops in the Roman world is incidentally attested by Letter II of St. Gregory where we learn that a bishop, while travelling on ecclesiastical business, could make use of the *Cursus Publicus* in much the same manner as a Roman official bent on matters of state.³²³

2. References to Fourth Century Political History

In a letter to the presbyters of Nicomedia St. Gregory refers casually to the former prominence of that city before the rise of Constantinople to preëminence, and he also mentions the recent destruction of the public buildings of Nicomedia.³²⁴

Reference is made in the *Contra Eunomium* to the death of the praetorian prefect Domitian together with a quaestor named Montius at the hands of the Emperor Gallus,³²⁵ and to the subsequent execution of Gallus by Constantius partly as punishment for the deed. Aëtius, according to St. Gregory, was at that time an inti-

³²⁰ Cf. "Episcopalis Audientia" DS II 697-698; Kirsch I 459-468; "Die Stellung der Kirche im öffentlichen Leben des christlichen Römerreiches."

³²¹ Ep. VII P 34-35. On intercessory letters cf. pp. 55-56 *supra*.

³²² Ep. VIII P 35-36.

³²³ Ep. II P 15, 9-11. Cf. "Cursus Publicus" DS I 1645-1672; Hefele-Leclercq I 11.

³²⁴ Ep. XVII P 53, 10-16. An earthquake followed by a fire had destroyed the buildings. Cf. "Constantinopolis," PW IV 963 ff. "Constantius" *ibid.* 1084 ff.

³²⁵ *Ibid.* 1094 ff. Seeck in this article cites the *Contra Eunomium* as a source. Cf. also Jaeger's note ad loc.

mate of Gallus at the court, having been sponsored there by the colorful Theophilus "the Blemmys,"³²⁶ Both, though implicated in the crime, escaped the extreme penalty suffered by Gallus.³²⁷ Philostorgius in his account declares that it was through the good offices of Leontinus, Bishop of Antioch, that Gallus received Aëtius as his intimate and his instructor in religious matters.³²⁸ He makes no mention here of Theophilus, but the latter was under the special patronage of Leontinus and is mentioned elsewhere by Philostorgius³²⁹ as closely associated with Gallus, so it is quite plausible that he acted for the bishop in the matter of having Aëtius received favorably at court.

There is one casual allusion to the great famine which occurred in Cappadocia shortly before St. Basil became bishop, and during which the latter gave alms generously to the poor.³³⁰

3. Civil Administration and Officials

Remote though Cappadocia might be, it was still acutely conscious in the fourth century of the strong hand of its Roman masters but not intimidated thereby as some of the following references indicate.³³¹ By way of illustration St. Gregory twice discusses the meaning of the title βασιλεύς, i.e., "Emperor." It is

³²⁶ A peculiar personage who lived an ascetic life and passed for a saint among his Arian contemporaries. Cf. Duchesne II 277-278; "Theophilus" (35) PW R 2 V 2167-2168. For the term Blemmys cf. "Blemmyes" PW III 566-568.

³²⁷ J I 28,23 - 29,6; 35,17 - 36,2. Cf. Tillemont VI 409.

³²⁸ III 27. Philostorgius says that at first Basil of Ancyra and Eustathius of Sebaste, since they hated Aëtius, calumniated him to Gallus who believed them and ordered the death of Aëtius. But Leontinus then gave the Emperor contrary information; whereupon Gallus received Aëtius most favorably. St. Gregory also refers to the enmity of Basil and Eustathius toward Aëtius: J I 38, 13-15 and 28, 8-15.

³²⁹ IV 1.

³³⁰ J I 53, 10-11. The date is approximately 368. Cf. "Basile, Evêque de Césarée" DHGE VI 1115. Cf. also Jaeger's note ad loc.; Stein *Encomium* 37-38.

³³¹ Cf. Kirsch I 466-468.

thence apparent that the name connotes an absolute ruler to him and, by implication, to some of his contemporaries, for he says: "... we call the Emperor both independent and without a master"³³² and "he is ruled by no one and rules his subjects."³³³

Modestus, Valens' Praefectus Praetorio, is depicted as impressing upon the people of Cappadocia that they ought to consider it of the greatest moment that the Emperor was willing to be a member of the same Church as the common people, and that therefore they ought not quibble over the alteration of a word or two of the Creed. St. Basil, according to his brother, boldly replied "that it was indeed of the greatest moment for the Emperor to share in the Church. For he said that it was important for his soul to be saved, not as that of the Emperor, but merely as that of a man; but that he (Basil) was so far from subtracting from or making an addition to the Creed, that he would not even change the order of the things written."³³⁴

St. Gregory himself did not hesitate to advocate opposition to the Emperor when the rights of the Church or the law of God were in question, but in three allusions he soberly takes stock of the fact that the Emperor has at his beck the whole power of the Roman Empire.³³⁵

He makes specific reference to four Emperors: Gallus, as mentioned above,³³⁶ and in connection with the story of the latter, Constantius:³³⁷ Valens, in the account of the persecution;³³⁸ Theodosius, the latter called "the most worshipful Emperor" as the donor of St. Gregory's privilege of using the *Cursus Publicus*.³³⁹

In a few incisive sentences St. Gregory gives us a vivid picture of the public officials in the Emperor's immediate circle. He de-

³³² J I 178, 8-18. Every unquestionable reference to the Emperor uses the title βασιλεύς.

³³³ J I 191, 16-19.

³³⁴ J I 64, 5-15.

³³⁵ Ep. XIX P 64, 20-22; J I 59,25 - 60,4; 62, 18-21.

³³⁶ J I 35, 8-21. Cf. also 29,4.

³³⁷ J I 29, 5.

³³⁸ J I 59-65 *passim*.

³³⁹ Ep. II P 15, 9-11.

clares that Valens had as his assistants in his persecution of Christians in the East,

all those who were in office; both the attendants about his person and the men in charge of affairs, some willingly inclining (to these acts) by reason of a similar mentality, but others, many of them, through fear of his power readily favoring the things that were according to his pleasure, and because of the severity shown against those cleaving to the true Faith, displaying their zeal for his cause.³⁴⁰

There are also specific references to several public officials. In connection with Valens' persecution mention is made a number of times of Modestus, then Praefectus Praetorio Orientis, to whom St. Gregory alludes as ὁ ὑπαρχος³⁴¹ and ὁ πάσης ἄρχων μετ' ἐκείνων (i.e., the Emperor) τῆς βασιλείας.³⁴² He refers to three well-known features of the power of the Praefectus in his day: first, that he was next in authority to the Emperor himself in the East;³⁴³ second, that his power was extensive, but depending always on the Emperor; and, third, that it embraced, among other things, sweeping judicial power. Thus St. Gregory tells us that the Praefectus preceded Valens in his journey to central Asia Minor and

having previously received the authority of the Emperor, kept summoning people before him, rendering a power which was already fear-inspiring because of its greatness more terrible by reason of the unsparing quality of its punishments.³⁴⁴

St. Gregory goes on to recount how Valens, to abet these efforts of Modestus against eastern Christians, and especially those of Cappadocia, enlisted the aid of Demosthenes who had at one time

³⁴⁰ J I 60, 4-11.

³⁴¹ J I 61, 19-20; 62, 19; 65, 10. The same word is used of the office of praetorian prefect in general: Ep. XVII P 52, 5.

³⁴² J I 61, 11-12.

³⁴³ *Ibid.* 10 - 13.

³⁴⁴ J I 62, 18-21. On the powers of the Praefectus, cf. "Praefectus Praetorio" DS IV 616-619; Bury I 27-28, 42-43.

been his chief cook, an official position of importance under the Empire.³⁴⁵

An interesting reference reflects a characteristic feature of fourth century provincial administration. St. Gregory describes the leadership of the heretical faction who opposed him at Sebastea as follows: "... the comes (κόμης)³⁴⁶ himself who had been placed in command over them, acting as general against us and arousing the power of the praeses (ἡγεμόνος) against us. . . ."³⁴⁷ He thus attests that in Armenia Minor, the province where Sebastea was located,³⁴⁸ as in other Roman provinces at that time, the separation of the civil from the military authority made almost universal in the time of Diocletian, continued to exist. The passage also implies the fact that the respective powers of the comes (or dux) and of the praeses supplemented one another.³⁴⁹

In a general reference to consuls the term ὑπατοί is used in accordance with long usage.³⁵⁰

Finally, an allusion employed by way of illustration refers to an official connected with the overseeing of aqueducts. Such officials were important personages under the Empire, but this reference is too brief and casual to make it clear just which official is meant or his duties and functions.³⁵¹

³⁴⁵ J I 64,29 - 65,2. Cf. "coquus" DS I 1502; also note 316 *supra*.

³⁴⁶ Since the time of Constantine, the dux, who was the commander of the troops garrisoned in a province, was given the title "comes." Cf. "Comes" DS I 1372. For a complete discussion of the history of the title cf. Seeck, "Comites" PW IV 622-679.

³⁴⁷ Ep. XIX P 64, 20-22. For the title ἡγεμών cf. "Praeses" DS IV 627-628.

³⁴⁸ Cf. note 17 *supra*. On Armenia Minor cf. "Provincia" DS IV 728.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 721-722. Cf. Stein, *Geschichte* I 105-106.

³⁵⁰ Ep. XVII P 52, 4. Cf. Magie 8-9.

³⁵¹ Ep. XVII P 50, 24-26; cf. "cura aquarum" DS I 1615-1617; "circitor" DS I 1186.

CHAPTER III

INTELLECTUAL LIFE

A. THE ATTITUDE OF A CHURCH FATHER TOWARD PAGAN LEARNING

Constantine's Edict of Toleration, it is true, opened up a new era, politically and socially, for the Church. It also created an imperative need for religious leaders properly trained for the more prominent part which they must henceforth take in civil and political affairs. They must be fitted as well for the responsibility of guiding and defending the rapidly expanding Church. And yet there was no Christian system of education available for the purpose. Contemporary pagan schools afforded the only training ground for leaders, and such formal education involved intensive acquaintance with the works of pagan authors and with the art of rhetoric. Consequently the centuries-old problem of the place of pagan learning in Christian life became more acutely in need of solution as the fourth century progressed. The strong feeling stirred up among educated Christians by the edict of Julian throws into strong relief the importance they attached to the traditional education.¹

Two distinct trends of Christian thought regarding pagan culture can be followed in the complex pattern of the testimony of previous centuries. On the one hand, many Christians were suspicious of and hostile to pagan learning: both literature and rhetoric. In their eyes the writings of pagan poets, especially dramatists, were dangerous to morals because shot through with polytheism and carnality, and careless of moral law. Tertullian was voicing an opinion common among Christians in his day when he called pagan

philosophers "patriarchs of heresies."² Christians looked askance also at rhetoric, for pagan devotees of the art of rhetoric ridiculed the literary form of the Greek Bible for its Hebraisms and its simple language so closely approaching that of daily life. Its carefully literal Latin versions were likewise the object of scornful aspersion on the part of pagan critics.³ Rhetoric consequently seemed a blasphemous art so preoccupied with form at the expense of meaning as to scorn Truth Itself. Furthermore, paganism was responsible for the harsh persecution of the faithful under the Early Empire. Many Christians accordingly held pagan culture in such abhorrence as to accept the Bible as their only book and to reject the whole intellectual heritage of pagan antiquity. A succession of literary witnesses from the second to the fifth centuries attest that this intransigent attitude existed among their Christian contemporaries.⁴

On the other hand, even from the end of the second century educated Christians, beginning with Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria, made it evident that they recognized the propaedeutic value of pagan learning. Some even give outward expression to a secret reverence for certain pagan philosophers—Plato, for example—by endeavoring to show that they depended in some way on Moses and the Bible.⁵ And yet the strained relations then existing between the pagan and Christian worlds and their own perception of the implications for Christian morals inherent in extensive contact with pagan culture constrained them to voice severe criticism of its embodiment in literature and its mode of expression in rhetoric.

The position finally adopted toward the end of the fourth century by educated churchmen, such as St. Basil, St. Jerome, St.

² *de Anima* III PL II 692A.

³ For the ancient sources cf. de Labriolle 22 notes 1 and 2.

⁴ e.g., Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, Lactantius, St. Jerome, St. Gregory Nazianzen, Synesius of Cyrene, the historian Socrates. Cf. de Labriolle 23-26; "Lettres Classiques" DACL VIII 2904; Bardy (1) 20.

⁵ Cf. "Platonisme des Pères" DTC XII 2294; de Labriolle 27 note 1; Bardy (1) 5 ff.

¹ In the following brief sketch which makes no pretensions to exhaustiveness, de Labriolle's treatment, 1-39, is followed except as otherwise noted. On this subject cf. also "Lettres Classiques" DACL VIII 2885-2910; Bardenhewer III 3-7; Boulenger 18-24; Fliche et Martin III 405-428; Bardy (2), (3) *passim*.

Augustine,⁶ was in line with the latter trend. They concluded that Christians ought to engage in the pursuit of pagan learning—both literature and rhetoric—but eclectically, that is, only insofar as it would assist in the defense and propagation of the Catholic faith. At the same time, it became a carefully observed convention with them to affect an attitude of aloofness from the pagan learning in which they themselves had been thoroughly schooled and to pretend to no dependence upon it in their writing.

From the *Letters* and the *Contra Eunomium* it becomes apparent that St. Gregory shares these views of his educated Christian contemporaries regarding pagan culture. It is clear also that although he apparently did not attend formal schools he had acquired the considerable familiarity with pagan letters and rhetoric which the educated man of letters of his day normally obtained in the schools. His references are informative both of the substance of that training and of the attitude of contemporary educated Christians toward pagan learning.

St. Gregory's anxiety to give an impression of detachment from ἡ ἔξωθεν παιδεία is clearly illustrated by a letter to Libanius. Here he goes out of his way to attribute whatever learning he possesses to two sources: the Scriptures and his brother St. Basil. The latter was, he says, his only "didascalus," and imparted the formal learning he himself had imbibed from Libanius and other teachers especially in the art of rhetoric. This pursuit then became for the young Gregory "the object of his love," he confesses.⁷ In fact so attractive did he find it that it lured him away from a priestly career when he had already assumed the office of lector. This becomes apparent from a letter addressed to him by St. Gregory Nazianzen reproaching him for this defection, and for desiring to be known as a rhetor rather than a Christian.⁸ Evidently his interest in

⁶ Cf. Basil *ad Adolescentes de Legendis Libris Gentilium*, ed. Boulenger, *passim*; Jerome *Apologia contra Rufinum* I, XXX; *Ep.* LXX; Augustine *de Doctrina Christiana* II XL; Pinault 34-38; Fleury Chap. III "Hellenisme et Christianisme" esp. 61-69; Marrou 387-413.

⁷ *Ep.* XIII P 43, 5-21. Cf. Bardenhewer III 188. St. Basil gained an illustrious reputation as teacher of rhetoric in his earlier years. Cf. Fox 87.

⁸ Greg. Naz. *Ep.* XI Cf. Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* IV, 26, who refers to St. Gregory as a teacher of rhetoric.

rhetoric was considered by his namesake to be in excess of the restrained cultivation of the art advocated for the Christian student of the day. The terms "Christian" and "rhetor" seem to have been regarded by St. Gregory Nazianzen as mutually exclusive. Subsequently the erstwhile rhetorician, having entered in earnest upon his career of churchman, ostensibly forsook his first love and committed himself to the thesis of his fourth century Christian contemporaries: that pagan learning has but limited usefulness. However, from the letter to Libanius just referred to and obviously written during this later period of his life, it is quite evident that he still highly esteemed the esthetic elements of pagan erudition.⁹

The range of his interest in fields other than literature and rhetoric, howsoever he came by it, is indicated in some measure by casual references in the *Letters* and the *Contra Eunomium* alone, and is instructive as to what intellectual achievement in the fourth century could be without benefit of formal training. He specifically declares in a letter filled with such allusions that he has traveled some and read much.¹⁰ He refers in passing in the *Contra Eunomium* to geometry, astronomy, medicine, grammar, the physical sciences, and philosophy, in such a way as to imply at least a cursory acquaintance with them.¹¹ He has no time, however, for detailed scientific investigation, he tells a correspondent to whom he has recounted a tale about the wonderful cure which the hearing of good news effected in a man suffering from a disease that had baffled the skill of physicians. "I cannot explain (the phenomenon)," admits St. Gregory, "for I have not leisure to treat such matters scientifically, and he who told me the story did not add an explanation of the cause."¹²

Nevertheless when it served the purpose of his polemics he could and did engage in more serious investigation, for in one instance at least he mentions having indulged in textual criticism of a sort. Some experts, he says, claim that a certain reading of a phrase in

⁹ *Ep.* XIII P 42-44, esp. 44, 1-5.

¹⁰ *Ep.* XX P 66, 12-15.

¹¹ *J* I 265, 9-22; 356, 11-15. Some idea of his knowledge of these branches is indicated *infra* pp. 114-117 and 123 ff.

¹² *Ep.* XIII P 42, 15-16.

the Book of Proverbs is not in the original Hebrew, and he himself also has found a different reading "in more ancient copies."¹³ Such references and hints seem to indicate that St. Gregory, like the typical product of formal education of that day, reflected a great emphasis on rhetoric and belles-lettres and a polite second-hand acquaintance with other fields of knowledge available at the time.

Against such a background it is interesting to note his scornful attitude toward the intellectual achievements of Eunomius as he saw them. Like the genuinely educated man of any age St. Gregory had his own standards and was therefore sensitive to what he considered to be false achievement in his contemporaries. He charges Eunomius with using fine phrases and big words to cloak his meager store of fatuous and vapid ideas, maintaining that so much empty show but accentuates the falsity and emptiness of what he has to say.¹⁴ He insists that Eunomius' writings are merely a patch-work made up of bits taken from various learned authors.¹⁵ He specifically accuses him of having put "certain books" under contribution for a great array of nicely turned phrases.¹⁶ He seems thereby to imply that the lexica and compendia so long put into requisition elsewhere had penetrated to backward Cappadocia and its environs by the fourth century. Since St. Gregory himself and other men of that day habitually made use of such lexica and compendia and indulged in impressive rhetoric, his quarrel with Eunomius on these scores must have resulted from what he considered Eunomius' complete dependence upon such resources unrelieved by any substance of his own. Apparently there was a standard of taste beyond which one ought not go. Presumably St. Gregory would not have considered these charges good polemical materials unless many of his contemporaries held similar standards of taste.

B. FOURTH CENTURY EDUCATION

In Cappadocia—in contrast to many provinces of the Empire—schools were not common before the fourth century. Moreover,

¹³ J II 339,29 - 340,4.

¹⁴ J I 24,6 - 26,10; 116, 1-5; 329, 27-32; J II 80, 4-6; 388,28 - 389,3.

¹⁵ J I 252, 1-6; J II 158,28 - 159,20.

¹⁶ J I 24, 10-12; 251,31 - 252,2.

education was not widespread there in the fourth century despite the fact that a number of highly educated churchmen, rhetors, and public officials were born in Cappadocia and some were educated there.¹⁷

St. Gregory in one instance speaks explicitly of a lack of literacy among his contemporaries. "We Cappadocians," he tells a correspondent, "are poor (in material things), and poor most of all in those who can write."¹⁸ The context makes it clear that he is referring here to illiteracy.

That some children in fourth century Cappadocia and its vicinity were, however, being taught writing—and other subjects as well—is indicated by a few references. For example in the sketch St. Gregory gives of his opponent's career he mentions an instance of instruction being given privately to the children of a home of no apparent wealth or distinction located, he expressly states, in the native land of Eunomius which bordered on Cappadocia. He tells us that Eunomius, having acquired some proficiency in shorthand, earned his board during a period when he was living with relatives partly by furnishing his services as scribe, and also by acting as teacher for the children of the household.¹⁹

He relates besides how Eunomius' father who was a farmer earned his living during the winter "by skillfully carving out the letters of the alphabet and syllables for children."²⁰ There must have been a considerable demand for such alphabets if a farmer could earn his living for several months each year by making them, and this fact implies in its turn that some instruction in writing was being given though not, of course, necessarily in Cappadocia and its environs. In imparting this information about Eunomius' father St. Gregory is stressing the obscurity and very ordinary character of Eunomius' background, so it is justifiable to assume

¹⁷ Cf. "Schulen" PW R.2 II 764-768; CAH XI 609 ff.; Bardy (2) *passim*. The one great center of education in Cappadocia was the school of Caesarea. Cf. Schemmel 620-624.

¹⁸ Ep. XV P 46, 15-16.

¹⁹ J I 37, 1-5.

²⁰ J I 36, 19-22. Other sources bear witness that in learning to write the child began by tracing with his stylus letters marked on wax or carved on a wooden block. Sen. Ep. XCIV, 51; Quint. V 14, 31. Cf. "Educatio" DS II 482; and MM XIV 114.

that the carving of alphabets was not a specially noteworthy achievement for a fourth century farmer in the interior of the plateau of Asia Minor, nor was it unusual. It may be significant too that he carved alphabets rather than utensils and the like which had certainly been a product of farmers' winter labors in earlier times.²¹

Other passages refer to the instruction of children in schools, but the allusions are merely casual and it is not clear whether they are illustrative of conditions in Cappadocia. Reference is made to the schoolmaster with his punitive stick,²² and to the fact that young children received a thorough instruction in the grammar of nouns²³ and of pronouns;²⁴ and to the teaching of "the language of the Hebrews or of the Romans."²⁵ In the light of the linguistic situation in St. Gregory's environs where the language of the literati was Greek, and a popular language existed side by side with it,²⁶ his choice of Latin and Aramaic for illustrative purposes is interesting. The allusion is too casual, however, to be illuminating.

St. Gregory delivers himself of a complaint which underscores the inconvenience consequent to the limited circulation of literary works in the fourth century in Letter XXIX written to his brother Peter with regard to the first "book" of the *Contra Eunomium*. This first section of the latter was an answer to Eunomius' second *Apologia*. St. Gregory managed to borrow a copy of the latter but he complains that the person who loaned it demanded its return in short order, allowing the Bishop "neither to copy it nor to dwell upon it at leisure."²⁷

C. RHETORIC

1. The Place of Rhetoric in Education

The study of rhetoric or oratory formed the last part of the Roman program of education and was the dominating influence in

²¹ Georgics I 11. 259 ff.

²² J I 193, 23-24.

²³ 182, 3-12. Cf. 327,31 - 328,2.

²⁴ J II 258, 18-23.

²⁵ J I 328, 14-15.

²⁶ Cf. note 165 *infra*.

²⁷ Ep. XXIX P 84, 9-13.

the course of studies followed during the first three or four centuries of our era. Literature, philosophy, and the sciences seem to have been considered of value in the schools chiefly insofar as they could embellish fine sentences with illustrations, arguments, and apt turns of thought and phrase.²⁸

In the light of this traditional primacy of rhetoric in the schools a letter to Libanius, one of the most prominent of fourth century sophists,²⁹ is interesting. St. Gregory here makes it plain that he considers rhetoric a very important part of a young man's education, and likewise that there is a growing lack of interest in the study of that branch of learning on the part of the younger generation in his day. "I hope," he says, "that Cynegius is as far removed as possible from the common disease which has now seized upon young men, and that he willingly applies himself to the study of oratory; but if otherwise, it is right to force him to it, even if unwilling."³⁰

One of the common practices in schools of rhetoric, from the end of the fourth century B. C. on, was to require the students to compose and declaim discourses on some assigned subject of a controversial nature but of no practical value. St. Gregory alludes to the continuance of this custom in schools of secular learning in his day. The purpose of this, he declares, is to exercise the students in readiness of tongue and mind.³¹

2. Fourth Century Sophists and Their Audience

Since the study of rhetoric was preëminent in fourth century education, it is not surprising to learn that the teachers of that discipline, the sophists, were frequently highly esteemed by many of their contemporaries. The name "sophist" continued to have in the fourth century, as it had in earlier times, two separate streams of meaning. It was by turns a title of honor and a scornful epithet³²

²⁸ Cf. de Labriolle 10.

²⁹ Cf. "Libanius" LTK VI 540-541; also p. 53 *supra*.

³⁰ Ep. XIV P 46, 5-11. Cf. Müller 85.

³¹ J I 30, 5-8. Cf. 42,29 - 43,5; J II 245, 7-9. Cf. "Melete" PW XV 496-500.

³² For a compilation of some of the literary witnesses of the period of the Early Empire on this point cf. Hatch 101-102. On the position of teachers and their immunities cf. ESAR 853 ff.

and we find evidence of both connotations in the *Letters* and the *Contra Eunomium*.

In their own towns and villages fourth century sophists were regarded as leaders and spokesmen and commonly held high municipal posts, acting at times as legates to the emperors.³³ They were generally requisitioned as speakers when a pompous speech was needed to grace some public gathering,³⁴ for their specialty was epideictic oratory. Thus St. Gregory writes a letter cordially inviting Stagirius, a well-known sophist of the day,³⁵ to be guest speaker at some gathering the nature of which is not revealed by the context. The *éclat* which will be given to the assembly by the presence of the sophist is compared by the bishop to the effect of stage properties on an audience; hence he strongly urges him to come.³⁶

The erudition, real or pretended, and the skill in declamation exhibited by the sophists evoked open-mouthed admiration from many of their simpler listeners, bewildered by the very multiplicity of talents. Some few sophists awakened the sincere approbation even of the more discerning by reason of what was looked upon as genuine accomplishment. To the latter group belongs Libanius the teacher of St. Basil³⁷ for whom St. Gregory evinces real esteem in two letters. In both he refers with grateful and admiring appreciation to letters written to him by Libanius. He begs the sophist not to carry into effect the threat he had apparently made to cease from the practice of rhetoric. "For they who do not see the sun do not by that hinder the sun's existence. Even so, neither is it right that the beams of your eloquence should be dimmed because of those who are dim-sighted in the perceptions of their souls."³⁸ Again, after declaring that he owed to his brother St. Basil whatever knowledge of oratory he possessed, he adds, "If Basil was the instructor of our oratory and if he had his wealth from your

³³ Cf. Rohde 315 ff.

³⁴ On the variety of occasions when the sophists served as speakers cf. *ibid.* 326 ff.

³⁵ Cf. pp. 34-35 *supra*. On the identity of Stagirius cf. chap. I note 51 *supra*.

³⁶ Ep. IX P 37, 6-9.

³⁷ Cf. note 29 *supra*.

³⁸ Ep. XIV P 46, 1-4.

treasures, then what we possess is yours even if we have received it from others; and if these possessions are few, the water in the jars may be scanty but nevertheless it comes from the Nile."³⁹

Two letters exchanged between St. Gregory and Stagirius witness to the mutual cordial feeling existing also between this sophist and the Bishop. Stagirius, couching his letter in typically sophistic vein, asks St. Gregory to negotiate a lumber transaction for him. He feels sufficiently sure of his standing with the bishop to incorporate in the request a sly thrust at bishops as a class. "Every bishop is very grasping," he says, "and as much as you have surpassed the others in eloquence, in that measure do you cause me fear lest you vigorously withstand my request."⁴⁰ The bishop's reply, cleverly meeting the sophist on his own ground, pokes a bit of fun in its turn at sophists and banteringly accedes to his request.⁴¹ The playful and familiar tone of both letters implies a background of friendly intercourse between this fourth century bishop and a sophist, a relationship not by any means unique in that day as other sources attest.⁴² St. Gregory's admiration for the basically superficial achievement of Libanius and Stagirius reflects the artificial taste of the age which was one of cultural decline compared with earlier periods.

But despite the well-authenticated fact of the respect and esteem held for the sophists as a class by the masses in the fourth century, and the approbation for certain sophists evinced by some members of the intellectual set of which St. Gregory is typical, there likewise was manifest an attitude of hostility to the "tribe of the sophists"⁴³ with all its works and pomps especially in Christian circles.⁴⁴ Besides feeling a natural prejudice against them as representatives of the pagan tradition the more conservative dis-

³⁹ Ep. XIII P 44, 1-5.

⁴⁰ Ep. XXVI P 80, 20-23. For the text in more detail, cf. pp. 8-9 *supra*.

⁴¹ Ep. XXVII P 81-82.

⁴² St. Basil had friendly relations with Libanius. Cf. Fox 87 ff. St. Gregory Nazianzen likewise was on friendly terms with several sophists. Cf. Guignet 36-39; Bardy (3) 2-5.

⁴³ Ep. XXVII P 81, 2.

⁴⁴ St. John Chrysostom, for example, placed the sophists, even including his former teacher Libanius, in the same category with other enemies of the Faith: tyrants, kings, philosophers, etc. Cf. Ameringer 27.

approved traits in them similar to those for which Plato had criticized their forerunners in his day: their inanity and their making a trade of knowledge.⁴⁵ In the letter to Stagirus to which reference has already been made above St. Gregory testifies graphically to the latter characteristic when he makes of it a blunt delineation of sophists which he offers as a foil to Stagirus' bantering criticism of bishops as "grasping." "Consider, admirable sir," he says,

who is more 'ungrasping': we who are so readily 'staked in' by your epistolary skill, or the tribe of the sophists whose art consists in making a merchandise of letters. Who among the bishops ever levied tribute from eloquence? Which one has made his disciples pay fees? But the sophists pride themselves on this, putting their learning up for sale just as the honey-boilers do their honey-cakes.⁴⁶

St. Gregory capitalizes on the attitude of animosity toward the sophists as a class on the part of the audience to which he appeals—and incidentally testifies to the existence of that attitude—by building up the case against Eunomius with frequent reference to manifestations of sophistic practice on the part of his antagonist. He alludes to him disparagingly over and over again as "the sophist." He levels against him, as if it might count heavily against him, the traditional criticisms of sophists mentioned above: his inanity—employing elaborate rhetoric to clothe vain and empty ideas; his making a trade of knowledge—in "making a fat living" by teaching his heretical doctrines.⁴⁷

In that day of hand-written productions works like the *Contra Eunomium* and Eunomius' *Apologia* reached their public for the most part by oral readings.⁴⁸ St. Gregory repeatedly refers to the fact that the audience who liked to listen to Eunomius found the bizarre sound of his elaborate rhetoric attractive to the extent of

⁴⁵ Hatch 99.

⁴⁶ Ep. XXVII P 82, 1-6.

⁴⁷ Cf. J I 38, 9-14; 53, 15-16.

⁴⁸ St. Jerome mentions having heard St. Gregory of Nyssa read the *Contra Eunomium* aloud. Cf. *de Vir. Ill.* c. 128.

being so preoccupied with it that they could not discern the lies which it cleverly concealed.⁴⁹ He calls those who listen with pleasure to such rantings of "the speech-maker," as he dubs Eunomius, "the old hags among our men" as opposed to "the educated" who easily detect the falsity of his opponent's teachings.⁵⁰ He thereby bears witness to the existence of two antagonistic standards of taste in sophistic rhetoric: one appealing to the admirers of Eunomius, and the other—a superior one—cultivated by those with whom St. Gregory liked to associate himself in such matters.

In order to discredit Eunomius as completely as possible especially with the latter group, St. Gregory criticizes in detail from the point of view of rhetoric the style of his opponent's works. Thus it is possible to glean incidentally some interesting items regarding the rhetorical idiosyncracies of fourth century sophists.

It was the practice among sophists to compensate for the shallow and sterile character of the ideas in their oral discourses by a spirited and dramatic presentation. They heightened the effect by gestures, varying intonations of the voice, the introduction—often forced—of stock expressions and pet topics, and the lavish use of rhetorical figures.⁵¹ These features of sophistic practice are attested both by details of St. Gregory's criticism of Eunomius and also by his correspondence especially that with Stagirus.

Eunomius "the dithyrambist," as St. Gregory scornfully calls him,⁵² speaks with a "Lydian intonation,"⁵³ he tells us. He paints a picture of him

like a conjurer on the stage by parallel expressions of equal length, similar sound, and similar endings, as it were by castanets clashing out the argument by the rhythm of his little phrases. Now of like genus also, along with many other oddities, are the trillings in his introduction—those lazy and enervated Sotadean verses which I think he probably did not perform with quiet

⁴⁹ Cf. esp. J I 25,25 - 26,2; 26, 3-10; 92, 18-19; 177, 5-8; 252, 1-6; 375, 23-28; J II 48, 5-6; 250, 12-14; 251, 25-28; 380, 12-15.

⁵⁰ J I 317, 19-23.

⁵¹ Cf. Rohde 336 ff.

⁵² J I 259, 27-28.

⁵³ J I 27, 2-3.

bearing, but stamping a little with his foot and snapping his fingers sharply, declaimed in time with the rhythm.

...⁵⁴

Another reference to this demonstrativeness of the sophists occurs in St. Gregory's reply to Stagirus. In the introduction to this epistle the bishop himself displays a mastery of the sophist's art by his skilful juggling of words and ideas and then abruptly shuts off the easy flow. Half apologetically, as if to make excuse for his sophistic skill, he queries, "Do you see what you are doing by your subtle and musical power of words, you who have excited me though an old man to leap about, and who are gently inciting to the dance those who are inexperienced in dancing?"⁵⁵

Elsewhere he refers to Eunomius as one who "makes sport of and swaggers before his thick-skinned audience who proclaim him as having surpassed all by the power of his words."⁵⁶ Again he remarks cynically that Eunomius upon becoming acquainted with the polemic of the Bishop of Nyssa "will dance on my words," presumably in his reply.⁵⁷

The use of gestures and musical cadence as an artificial device to hold the attention of the audience was almost a necessity for the sophists by reason of the subjects upon which they delighted to discourse. Unreality held a strong appeal for them and pagan history and mythology were their chosen field.⁵⁸ The individual sophist usually had a favorite theme or themes with which he delighted to harangue any and all who might be willing to listen. St. Gregory in his reply to Stagirus refers to this predilection of sophists for a particular topic. He agrees to grant the sophist's request for lumber by saying, "I have ordered there should be given to you who in your declamations make a parade of the Persian wars, rafters

⁵⁴ J I 25, 6-15. For the Sotadean verses cf. Norden I 291.

⁵⁵ Ep. XXVII P 82, 7-10. To St. Gregory, as generally in antiquity, the term "dance" connoted interpretive and rhythmic motions of head, hands, and body, swaying, and even leaping. Cf. Friedländer II 104. The exaggerated gestures of the sophists seem to remind him of the pantomimic dance so popular in his day.

⁵⁶ J I 386, 5-9.

⁵⁷ 360, 27-29.

⁵⁸ Cf. Ameringer 13; Méridier 9.

equal in number to the soldiers fighting at Thermopylae, all of them of a good length and, according to your Homer, 'long-shafted.'"⁵⁹

Besides the allusion to Stagirus' pet topic of declamation the introduction here of the Homeric epithet and labelling it as Homer's is another typically sophistic touch. A second example of this sort of thing occurs in the same letter when he says, "If 'to grasp' means 'to seek gain' and this is the meaning of the expression which your sophistic skill has taken over for us from the sanctuary of Plato. . . ."⁶⁰ Similar hair-splitting about meanings of words and the play on words so characteristic of sophistic practice are illustrated also by Stagirus' letter to the bishop. "Since I need rafters (στρωτήρων) for roofing my house—'poles' (κάμους) another sophist would have preferred to say, or 'props' (χάραντες) taking pride in pet phrases rather than being a master of usage—grant a gift of many hundreds."⁶¹

Though they chose rather to declaim upon a favorite topic, the sophists also prided themselves upon their ability to speak extemporaneously on any subject. In preparation for this contingency they memorized a store of stock phrases and expressions gleaned from various sources but capable of adaptation to many subjects and occasions.⁶² Though Eunomius' work can scarcely be classed as extemporaneous, still St. Gregory finds fault with the manifestation in it of this sophistic device, arraigning Eunomius more than once for "cropping one phrase from one place, another from another, and by them weaving together the patchwork of his treatise, not without care gluing together and fitting together the joining of his words."⁶³ Referring again to this typically sophistic strategy he says, "It is not pleasing to me to insert in my works the nauseous foolishness of the rhetor (Eunomius) and to display in the midst of my arguments his ignorance and senselessness."⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Ep. XXVII P 82, 11-14. On the significance of the reference to Thermopylae cf. Chap. I note 53 supra.

⁶⁰ Ep. XXVII P 81, 13-15. The expression is not found in Plato. Cf. Pasquali's note ad loc.

⁶¹ Ep. XXVI P 81, 2-6. For the play on "poles" and "props," cf. Deferrari IV 314 note 1.

⁶² Cf. Hatch 94-95.

⁶³ J I 252, 1-6; 24, 7-14.

⁶⁴ J II 158,28 - 159,20.

Gestures then, cadence, topoi, play on words, apt phrases, were favorite devices of the sophists, but more than all these perhaps they set great store by rhetorical figures for the embellishment of their style.⁶⁵ In this respect also St. Gregory with scornful precision points out evidences of the Sophistic in Eunomius' style, and thus further bears unwitting testimony to what constituted the sophistic manner in his eyes and, by implication, in those of his contemporaries. He deprecates, for instance, Eunomius' use of paranomasia, isocolon, assonance, and homoioteleuton,⁶⁶ especially the latter.⁶⁷ He adduces as an example of a complete lack of taste a brief quotation in which Eunomius has made use at once of alliteration, homoioteleuton, parison, paronomasia, and polyptoton.⁶⁸ Other references to what he calls "the empty rattlings of the sophisms of Eunomius"⁶⁹ are likewise designed to reveal the latter as a flagrant violator of what St. Gregory and his intellectual associates considered standards of good taste in rhetoric.

3. *The Attitude of a Church Father Toward Rhetoric*

An adequate, statistically verified, appraisal of the style of Eunomius, as far as it can be judged from his extant works and from the excerpts of the non-extant second *Apologia* included in the *Contra Eunomium*, is a desideratum not, of course, within the province of this monograph.⁷⁰ The evidence herein considered at tests without question, it is true, that Eunomius did exhibit many of the mannerisms and stylistic peculiarities of fourth century sophists. The attempt made by St. Gregory, however, to discredit Eunomius on the evidence of what he considers an exaggerated style totally unbecoming the subject under discussion may seem paradoxical at first to the modern mind in the light of the fact that the Bishop himself betrays far more than does his antagonist

⁶⁵ Cf. Méridier 21 ff.

⁶⁶ J I 25, 6-7. Cf. Méridier 75.

⁶⁷ J I 259, 22-28.

⁶⁸ J I 366, 12-14.

⁶⁹ J II 98, 4-5. Cf. e.g., J I 24, 23 - 25, 4; 180, 17-18; 204, 23-27; 269, 21-22; 270, 9-12; 350, 9-11; 355, 25-28; J II 111, 8-12; 388, 28 - 389, 3.

⁷⁰ The question has been given some consideration by Méridier, Chapter V 69-78; and Norden II 558-562.

some of the characteristics of the sophistic to which he takes most exception.⁷¹ Frequently, for instance, the sentences in which he condemns Eunomius' use of rhetorical figures are illustrative of the very figures upon which he casts aspersion.⁷² Indeed his early enthusiasm for sophistic rhetoric had so left its mark upon him that it was henceforth part of his very nature to write according to its tenets. He had no other mode of expression even when he most desired it.

His frequent modest protests of simplicity of style—a simplicity which he likes to contrast with the turgescence of Eunomius—are of the same paradoxical character. He disclaims both the intent and the ability to make use of the tactics of Eunomius though in practice he excels him: "I acknowledge that I neither have prepared any argument sharpened by rhetoric for the contest, nor do I put forward any cleverness of dialectic shrewdness for the battle against my enemies."⁷³ Again, "These are the arguments which we who, as our disparaging (opponent) says, 'try to write without rhetorical training,' have uttered like a clown in answer to our new 'Paeonian' in our rustic tongue, etc."⁷⁴ In another place he asks "What's this, Eunomius? Are you too travelling on foot like us unlettered men and abandoning your artistic periods. . . ."⁷⁵ Instances of the same sort of thing might be multiplied,⁷⁶ but these will suffice to illustrate the fact of his affected indifference regarding style.

In this attitude of affected indifference manifested by his protests of simplicity of style, as well as by his paradoxical condemnation of the stylistic extravagances of Eunomius, St. Gregory is merely bowing to a convention widely subscribed to by many of his contemporaries.⁷⁷ As an earnest of their estrangement from pagan culture and of their conviction of the strictly limited usefulness of pagan learning to the Christian they pretended to no dependence upon rhetoric in their writings and public discourses.⁷⁸ "Why

⁷¹ Cf. Méridier 79-280 esp. 275.

⁷² *Ibid.* 162-183 esp. 181.

⁷³ J II 1, 18 - 2, 3.

⁷⁴ J II 294, 30 - 295, 7.

⁷⁵ J II 208, 30 - 209, 3.

⁷⁶ e.g., J I 270, 9-12; 355, 25-28; J II 111, 8-12; 153, 12-16; 158, 28 - 159, 20.

⁷⁷ Cf. de Labriolle 27; Fliche et Martin III 407-408.

⁷⁸ Cf. Ameringer, 24-28; Guignet 43-70; Campbell 146-147.

is it necessary," asks St. Gregory, "for one who is beautiful with the adornment of truth to drag in the curious art of embellishment in order to acquire a counterfeit and cunningly devised beauty?"⁷⁹

But the fact of the matter is that these highly educated spirits could not cast off completely a vehicle of expression in which they had been thoroughly schooled and which was so well suited in many ways to the exigencies of the defense and propagation of the Faith.

Some, for example St. Basil, succeeded in avoiding rhetorical extravagance while at the same time making good use in their preaching and writing of early training in rhetoric.⁸⁰ St. Gregory of Nyssa on the contrary, succeeded only in being the most sophistic of them all, despite his conventional protests. He betrays earnest attention to style in composing even the *Contra Eunomium* when in a letter apologizing for the somewhat tardy completion of that polemic he modestly expresses the hope that the work is "worthy of the ears of the sophist" (i.e. Libanius) and that even some part of the dogmatic portion has been "not ungracefully expressed."⁸¹ His repeated apologies for the excessive length of the *Contra Eunomium* also point to his constant awareness of the effect of his style upon his audience and his sensitivity to their reactions.⁸²

The *Letters* likewise witness to St. Gregory's painstaking attention to the rules of rhetoric, for most are carefully polished rhetorical gems,⁸³ though here again he tries to give an impression of nonchalance. He concludes one of the most elaborate—Letter XX—for example, by saying that he carelessly tossed it off after dinner.⁸⁴ Letter IV, likewise obviously carefully polished, is re-

⁷⁹ J I 25,25 - 26,2.

⁸⁰ Campbell *passim* esp. 146-150. Cf. the testimony of St. Gregory to his brother's complete divorce from pagan rhetoric: J I 25, 21-25.

⁸¹ Ep. XV P 47, 4-8.

⁸² J II 70,24 - 71,4; 101, 5-8; 265, 4-10; 267, 15-16; 291, 15; cf. Puech III 413.

⁸³ Cf. pp. 64-65 *supra*.

⁸⁴ Pasquali, who looks upon the letter as a rhetorical exercise of the type of "ecphrasis" and not as the account of an actual experience, emphatically protests that it could not have been tossed off since it is too well done. Cf. SIFC 126. On the question as to whether it is merely a rhetorical exercise cf. Müller 67 and 81.

ferred to by its author as "the letter . . . in which there is no eloquence painted up with beautiful sounds and well-turned phrases so that by this means it be esteemed as a gift by learned men. . . ."⁸⁵

There is no doubt then that both in the *Letters* and in the *Contra Eunomium* St. Gregory, the while he avowed complete artlessness, fell far short of simplicity of style. In fact just because he was the least successful of the literary lights of the fourth century Church in getting away from the artificiality of contemporary rhetoric in his writings, he provides the richest source of them all⁸⁶ for a study of the flowering of that rhetoric in the curious literary phenomenon which we call the Second Sophistic.⁸⁷

4. The Second Sophistic: Asianism and Atticism

The Second Sophistic, which reached its climax during the fourth and early fifth centuries, was a merging of two distinct currents in rhetoric. The one, Asianism, was marked by the use of many highly poetic or newly coined words, by strict avoidance of the hiatus, and by an exaggerated attention to rhythm with a cadence that was often strongly suggestive of a dithyramb.⁸⁸ The other, Atticism, had sprung from the Alexandrian bent for imitation of the products of classical Greece and by the second century B. C. developed into a reaction against the extravagance of Asianism. Attic models were closely imitated by orators and historians; Attic purism and everything associated with it was revered; whatever was Attic and in the lexica had the weight of authority.

A long war between the two movements followed until at the beginning of the second century A. D. a middle course was adopted by some rhetoricians. Asianic luxuriance was chastened by Attic grammar. Asianism was crowned, as it were, with Atticism in a compromise which gradually resulted in the Second Sophistic.

⁸⁵ Ep. IV P 26, 17-20.

⁸⁶ Cf. Méridier 6; Guignet 39-42 and 318-324.

⁸⁷ For a brief but adequate summary of the origins and characteristics of the Second Sophistic cf. Campbell 1-19. In the following paragraphs I follow this account except as otherwise noted.

⁸⁸ For a good summary of Asianism as a stylistic influence cf. Norden I 131-155.

Though the Second Sophistic was a mingling of the two styles, the old and the new, the old—Atticism—was favored by imperial patronage and by the more respected literary men of the day. St. Gregory, himself a product of the Second Sophistic and therefore exemplifying some marks of both styles in his works, is but reflecting a contemporary fourth century attitude in his critical reaction respectively to Asianism and Atticism as he sees them manifested in the style of Eunomius.

He does not make specific reference to Asianism by name, but he berates such characteristics of that style as Eunomius' use of rhyming words for which he dubs him "the dithyrambist."⁸⁹ Again, he refers disparagingly to the latter's "Lydian intonation"⁹⁰ and repeatedly takes exception to the chattering and rattling of phrases composed of unusual combinations of words;⁹¹ also his use of "parallel expressions of equal length, similar sound, and similar endings, as it were by castanets clashing out the argument by the rhythm of his little phrases," as well as "the trillings in his introduction, those lazy and enervated Sotadean verses."⁹²

Whereas St. Gregory thus finds fault with Asianic traits in Eunomius' style and is content, as he says, for him to "have the advantage over him in such capers,"⁹³ he does not censure the fact of his Atticism but rather his failure to attain excellence in that respect. For example, he remarks somewhat sarcastically that Eunomius must have been very much preoccupied indeed, not to have perceived the fine solecism which he has introduced by the use of the word *εὐφροσύνη* in a sense which the Bishop feels is inaccurate. "He affects to be cleverly Attic," he declares, "with the phrase 'of those let in' but it is used differently by those who use the expression correctly, a use which they know who have become familiar with the language of the orator, but different from

⁸⁹ J I 259, 27-28.

⁹⁰ J I 27, 2-3.

⁹¹ Cf. note 69 *supra*.

⁹² J I 25, 6-15. Cf. note 54 *supra*.

⁹³ J I 25, 16-25. Nevertheless after a careful study embracing not only the *Contra Eunomium* but St. Gregory's other works as well, Méridier, 189, concludes that there is no charge regarding Eunomius' style which cannot be illustrated from St. Gregory's own style.

that commonly used by our new Atticist. But this latter is not in accord with my view."⁹⁴

Similarly he quotes from Eunomius' work a few lines in which the vocabulary is borrowed mainly from Attic authors, especially the tragedians, and with some asperity makes the following comment: "Behold the flowers of the ancient Attic! What smoothness and brilliance they flash upon the design of the treatise! How prettily and changefully they adorn it with the beauty of rhetoric! But let this be according to one's opinion," he concludes drily.⁹⁵ Such statements imply, of course, that their author is himself something of an authority on Attic purism, and these are not the only instances in which St. Gregory appears nothing loathe to adopt this role.⁹⁶

Atticism, as we have already remarked, had grown out of the Alexandrian desire to imitate esteemed authors of the Golden Age of Greece. Antiquarian in its origins, it never lost an archaistic worship of the past. Consequently the criterion of literary excellence in its eyes was the degree of success achieved in the imitation of the old Attic masters of style and composition. Hence St. Gregory points an accusing finger at Eunomius for his temerity in not closely imitating the pattern of "men famous in the field of rhetoric."⁹⁷ Whether or not this was a universally accepted fourth century norm, St. Gregory considers it a standard widely enough observed for him to make the violation of it a weapon against Eunomius.

It is a curious fact indeed that here, as in other instances cited in the preceding pages, St. Gregory undoubtedly regards as effective polemical material capably abetting theological arguments in a religious controversy the exposition of what he considers Eunomius' deficiencies as a rhetor. Therein resides additional tes-

⁹⁴ J I 41, 9-16.

⁹⁵ J I 158, 11-19.

⁹⁶ However, Méridier's study of St. Gregory's works and Stein's careful investigation of the syntax, vocabulary, and style of the saint's encomium on his brother Basil agree that "the Atticism indicated in his works is only a polish, it is not the systematic and learned purism of the grammarians, it is the intermittent purism of the sophist." (Méridier 96; Stein XCV.)

⁹⁷ J I 24, 23 - 25, 5. Cf. Méridier 17.

timony to the prominence of rhetoric at that time and its widespread appeal to the fourth century mind. That the fourth century, however preoccupied it might be with rhetoric, was not nevertheless of one mind in its regard is also patent from the foregoing references. They attest at least two conflicting standards of taste in matters within the province of rhetoric. The one, subscribed to by St. Gregory and those whose opinions he shared in such matters, was somewhat conservative, admired restraint and simplicity at least in theory, decried excess in word or gesture, valued content above form. The other, that of Eunomius and his circle, diametrically opposed to the first, frankly took pleasure in the bizarre, the strange, the extravagant, in bombastic grandiloquence, with little regard for the thought thus embodied. The latter group acclaimed the dispensers of this brand of rhetoric, the professional sophists. The other faction, though paying a meed of praise in some instances to certain few individual sophists, scorned them collectively as deceivers and pretenders, veritable intellectual charlatans.

D. PAGAN LETTERS

Eloquence in both the spoken and the written word, we repeat the well-known fact, was the goal of the program of education during the first centuries of our era.⁹⁸ To this end the student after being taught the elements of reading, writing, and counting, was thoroughly grounded in the works of those authors whose productions had come to be considered as classics in their respective fields since the days of their exploitation by the Alexandrian scholars. The texts furnished the basis for the study of such subjects as grammar, rhetoric, geography, history, philosophy. When the pupil reached the last stage of his formal training—that of rhetor—he was expected to have acquired sufficient familiarity with the classic authors to be able to adorn his oral and written discourses with apt quotations and allusions borrowed from them, and when appropriate, to imitate their language and style.

Though St. Gregory apparently was not educated in schools,

⁹⁸ "Educatio" DS II 462-490.

St. Basil, his chief tutor,⁹⁹ seems to have followed the customary procedure of fourth century educators, for the writings of his pupil betray familiarity with some of these authors and acquaintance with others, as will be indicated in the following pages. Moreover his attitude toward and employment of pagan letters is typical of that of other fourth century churchmen. Like them¹⁰⁰ he recognized the indispensability of pagan letters in the formal training which must form a necessary preparation for the study and understanding of Scripture and for the unveiling and refutation of heresy. And like them he frowned upon further use or enjoyment of pagan literature once the period of formative training was over, and carefully maintained an attitude of aloofness from it. But, again after their example, he makes use of purely decorative allusion to or quotation from some of these authors for the sake of imparting a certain elegance to what he has to say, and in addition is often involuntarily indebted to them for elements of style and syntax.¹⁰¹

In the *Contra Eunomium* he forges a weapon against Eunomius from the latter's use of profane authors. He declares that Eunomius mistakenly believed himself formidable to Basil and Gregory on account of the profane learning which he possessed.¹⁰² He refers scornfully to his antagonist's dependence upon the assistance of Plato and Aristotle and other non-Christian philosophers in composing his heretical works. To refute these the Bishop of Nyssa insists that he himself does not need the help of pagan letters.¹⁰³ And yet even as he writes he is making large use of what he affects to scorn.¹⁰⁴

This official hostility to pagan works—and the use of them in practice—turns up stubbornly even in less polemical circumstances. In Letter XI St. Gregory is writing to a correspondent who is somehow openly associated with enthusiasm for pagan authors. He confesses to him that he has had some difficulty in finding a

⁹⁹ Cf. p. 94 *supra*.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. note 6 *supra*.

¹⁰¹ Cf. "Lettres Classiques" DACL VIII 2885-2910.

¹⁰² J I 375, 7-14.

¹⁰³ J I 219, 1-2.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Cherniss 1-12, 63.

suitable introduction to the letter. He has mulled over the various Scriptural texts which he would have preferred to use for the purpose but "I did not know which to use," he writes, "not because of not finding something suitable, but because I thought it useless to write such things to one not conversant with them; for enthusiasm with regard to pagan literature has become to me an indication of one's not having an interest in sacred learning."¹⁰⁵ This time, however, it is not a question of learning but of decorative phraseology only. Nevertheless St. Gregory goes so far as to declare that enthusiasm for pagan literature precludes an interest in sacred learning and therefore familiarity with scriptural phraseology. Having thus made his position clear he then proceeds to fill the remainder of the letter with allusions to, and reminiscences of, the *Odyssey*,¹⁰⁶ naming the characters and describing the incidents correctly, but referring to the author carefully as "the teacher of your education."¹⁰⁷ The persistence of his protest of aloofness from pagan letters in such casual circumstances is interesting testimony to the earnestness with which he like other fourth century churchmen maintained that attitude.

1. Philosophy

a. Plato

To be associated in the mind of the faithful with pagan philosophy was dangerous for a churchman in the fourth century, for the specter of heresy hovered close by. St. Gregory seems to have grasped fully the possibilities here, for he is at great pains to prove Eunomius' dependence upon pagan philosophy.¹⁰⁸ At the same time he is careful to avoid any semblance of familiarity with these philosophers on his part lest his charges against Eunomius become a boomerang. But a cursory reading of the *Contra Eunomium* gives rise to the suspicion, and Cherniss' detailed study

¹⁰⁵ Ep. XI P 38,21 - 39,4. Cf. Ep. XVII P 54, 29-30.

¹⁰⁶ He very evidently held Homer as the least objectionable of the pagan authors as will be seen below. Cf. pp. 119-120 *infra*.

¹⁰⁷ Ep. XI P 39, 6.

¹⁰⁸ Cherniss declares, 7, that St. Gregory "desires to show that the work of Eunomius is nothing but a patchwork of phrases pillaged, some here, some there, from all the philosophers and rhetoricians who had preceded him."

confirms it, that St. Gregory himself gives evidence of a closer acquaintance than does Eunomius with both Plato and Aristotle. A careful study of even non-philosophical passages which are reminiscent of Plato makes the conclusion at least possible that St. Gregory "knew Plato accurately enough to quote him without having recourse to the writings of Plato himself or to hand-books."¹⁰⁹ He refers to Plato by name nevertheless only four times in the *Contra Eunomium*, and once in the Letters.¹¹⁰ However, there are many passages in the *Contra Eunomium* reminiscent of Plato or of Neoplatonism and there are at least two such sections in the Letters.¹¹¹

Further, there is implicit evidence that St. Gregory shares the esteem of other Church Fathers for Plato as the most Christian of the pagan philosophers and a master of artistic prose, though fully alert to the danger to the faith immanent both in the attractive doctrines of Plato and in their later development in Platonism. In two instances where he tries to disparage Eunomius on the ground of his dependence on Plato's philosophy it is plain that his objection is purely on doctrinal grounds. He declares that Eunomius, "struck by the beauty of the style of Plato, thinks it fitting to make his philosophy a dogma of the Church."¹¹²

b. Aristotle

St. Gregory in common with most of the early Church Fathers was thus more kindly disposed to Plato than to Aristotle, "the

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid. passim* and especially 67 note 40.

¹¹⁰ J I 329, 23; 330, 3; J II 215, 14-19; 315, 7-15; P 81, 13-15. Cherniss, 65-67, has listed the passages where St. Gregory mentions Greek philosophers or philosophical schools by name. Since his references are all to the Migne text, I have thought it worth-while to include here my references to the critical texts of Jaeger and Pasquali even though most of them duplicate his. Of the references to Plato mentioned above, however, he has not included that in Ep. XXVII, P 81, 13-15, since this letter was not included in editions previous to that of Pasquali, but was assigned to the correspondence of Basil and Libanius. Cf. Maas 988-993, 995-998, 1118.

¹¹¹ e.g., J I 48,25 - 49,1; 63, 24-27; 109, 14-16; 235,10 - 236,14; 246, 20 ff.; J II 204, 8-11; Ep. XVII P 53, 21 ff.; Ep. XX P 68, 14-17.

¹¹² J I 329,30 - 330,3; J II 215, 14-19. On the generally favorable attitude of the Fathers toward Plato cf. "Platonisme des Pères" DTC XII 2258.

atheist," "enemy of Providence," as they considered him.¹¹³ It is a strong point for St. Gregory's polemics to establish that Eunomius and his teacher Aëtius made a large use of what the Bishop of Nyssa does not hesitate to call "the evil skill of Aristotle."¹¹⁴ Whenever St. Gregory mentions Aristotle by name the reference is disparaging.¹¹⁵ He is not complimentary, for instance, when he calls Aristotle "patron and ally" of Eunomius. He speaks scornfully of the latter's use of the technical language of the *Categories* in his heretical works and also of his employment of syllogisms, accusing him of "shaking over us that Aristotelian spear."¹¹⁶

He himself is keen to discern and point out syllogisms,¹¹⁷ dilemmas¹¹⁸ and other Aristotelianisms¹¹⁹ and to reveal fallacies in them. For example, he indicates the weakness of Eunomius' logic by careful analysis of individual syllogisms.¹²⁰ He implies his own familiarity with Aristotle's teachings also when he refers to Eunomius as "taking refuge in a reasoning which Aristotle and his disciples did not teach."¹²¹ St. Gregory's own words are often plainly indebted to Aristotle's writings, though he makes no acknowledgment and at times may not be conscious of the influence, for Neoplatonism was in some respects shot through with Neoaristotelianism.¹²² In short, despite the conventional attitude of scorn toward Aristotle and all connected with him, it is obvious that St. Gregory himself was no stranger to his teachings. Of

¹¹³ Cf. *ibid.* 2319; "Aristotelisme de la Scolastique" DTC I 1869.

¹¹⁴ J I 38, 9-11.

¹¹⁵ Seven times: J I 35, 8-9; 38, 9-11; 331, 9-16; J II 153, 13; 208, 23-26; 293, 13-18; J I 389,30 - 390,1. Cherniss, 65-67, includes the first six of these in his list of allusions to Greek philosophers by name but does not include the seventh.

¹¹⁶ J I 389,30 - 390,1.

¹¹⁷ J I 56, 16; 57, 22; 176, 26-28; 177, 18-19; 180, 6-14; 184 *passim*; 192, 28; 389-390 *passim*; J II 52, 16; 144, 18-19; 153, 3-4; 194, 5-8; 209, 17-18; 212, 14-21; 213 *passim*.

¹¹⁸ J I 160, 30; 346, 6; 372, 12; J II 194, 5-8; 209, 15; 311, 14.

¹¹⁹ J I 211 - 212 *passim*; J II 281, 19-20; 282, 3; 283, 6-8; 293, 14-18; 320, 9-10.

¹²⁰ J I 180, 6-14; J II 213, 2-7.

¹²¹ 208, 23-26.

¹²² "Platonisme des Pères" DTC XII 2260. Cf. esp. J I 32, 24-25; 85, 4-9; 100, 6-10; 236, 16-17; 248, 24-30; 280, 10-15; J II 199, 18-21; 251, 31-33.

course, he could scarcely make his point against Eunomius without a first-hand knowledge of Aristotle. It is significant that he has the requisite knowledge when the demands of polemics call for it.

c. Other Philosophers

In addition to Plato and Aristotle other philosophers are mentioned by name in the *Contra Eunomium*: Philo Judaeus¹²³ and Epicurus.¹²⁴ As in the case of Plato and Aristotle such references are made with the intent to show the heretic's obvious dependence upon non-Christian philosophy both for words and for ideas. Here again the references are of a sort that can only come from a first-hand familiarity with the works of the writers in question. Further, St. Gregory scornfully refers to the followers of Eunomius as "the new Stoics and Epicureans."¹²⁵ Such allusions to non-Christian philosophers and borrowings from them made in the service of St. Gregory's polemics are a good illustration of the well-known tendency of the fourth century Fathers to make use of a knowledge of such literature in the interests of the Faith.

2. Oratory

a. Demosthenes

There are several references plainly imitative of Demosthenes with the vague allusiveness considered decorative at the time.¹²⁶ There are, however, two passages in which St. Gregory unwittingly reflects the traditional esteem in which the orator was held in antiquity. What he regards as an abortive attempt to imitate Demosthenic vigor seems to be another stone wherewith to hit Eunomius. He says of him, "Having braced up his argument with Demosthenic ardor, he has appeared to us as a second 'Paeanian'—

¹²³ J II 206,18 - 207,3; 159, 9-10.

¹²⁴ J I 330,32 - 331,9; 251, 1; J II 193, 24-26. (Cherniss does not have the last-named reference.)

¹²⁵ J II 100, 3-6.

¹²⁶ Cf., e.g., J I 30, 10-11 and 17-18; 31, 1; 45, 18-21; 46, 14-15; 58, 22-23.

of Oltiseris—imitating the sharpness of the orator in his struggle against us.”¹²⁷ Further, he sarcastically concludes the third book of the *Contra Eunomium* as follows:

These are the arguments which we who, as our disparaging (opponent) says, ‘try to write without rhetorical training’ have uttered like a clown in answer to our new ‘Paeanian’ in our rustic tongue. But to see how he contended with this opposition, sending forth against us those hot and fire-breathing words with Demosthenic vigor, let those who like to have a laugh consult the very works of the ‘orator.’ For our pen is not very hard to rouse to confute notions of impiety but is quite unsuited to the task of ridiculing the ignorance of untutored minds.¹²⁸

b. Isocrates

The same contrast between decorative allusiveness and polemical usage is seen in St. Gregory’s two references to Isocrates. In an epistle he quotes him briefly for the sake of imparting elegance: “I have sent this composition to you,” he declares, “not as Isocrates says ‘as a gift,’ for I do not consider it sufficiently worthwhile to serve as a material gift.”¹²⁹ In a reference in the *Contra Eunomium*, however, alive to the interests of his polemics he accuses his antagonist of filching from Isocrates material for his writings. “Once more poor Isocrates is gnawed at, plucked of words and figures for the composition of the subject under discussion.”¹³⁰

In concluding the section on prose writers we may include a decorative allusion which seems reminiscent of a phrase from Plutarch.¹³¹

¹²⁷ J II 293, 20-23.

¹²⁸ J II 294,30 - 295,7.

¹²⁹ Ep. XV P 46, 23-25. Cf. Isocr. *ad Demon.* (2)2.

¹³⁰ J II 159, 7-9. On the influence of Isocrates on the style of Eunomius cf. Norden II 561-562.

¹³¹ J I 37, 18. Cf. Plut. *Sent.* 10.

3. Poetry

a. Homer

Homer and Hesiod still enjoyed in the fourth century their ancient primacy in education.¹³² The material assembled in this section implies that St. Gregory’s tutors did not neglect to place the traditional emphasis at least upon Homer in his education, for he appears fairly familiar with both *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. In his references to Homer by name and in his allusions to the Homeric poems he reflects the generally good repute in which the ancients held that poet. Even so, in two instances he indicates that he prefers to maintain a somewhat detached attitude even toward Homer, since the latter represents the pagan tradition.¹³³

Like other writers of antiquity he found in Homer a mine rich in allusions and illustrations such as he and his contemporaries prized for the embellishment of their writings. It is significant of the tolerant attitude of his circle toward Homer, as contrasted with that toward other pagan authors, that he frankly makes use of decorative allusiveness to the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* with but a trace of apology. When he finds himself at a loss for words to describe a hill near Vanota, he does not hesitate to declare it “worthy of finding some Homer to praise it, more so than that famous Ithacan Neritum which the poet says is ‘very splendid and quivering with leaves.’”¹³⁴ And in other instances also he has resort to Homer for specially apt phrases, allusions, or illustrations.¹³⁵

This purely decorative and unabashed use of Homer appears even in the *Contra Eunomium*. For example, he draws an elaborate analogy between the crew of Odysseus drugged by the cup of Circe, and Eunomius’ disciples who have been mentally drugged by “another Homeric draught,” that is, their master’s pernicious doctrines.¹³⁶

Letter XI illustrates so well the fourth century bent for em-

¹³² Cf. Boulenger 16-17.

¹³³ Ep. XI P 39, 6; Ep. XXVII P 82, 13-14.

¹³⁴ Ep. XX P 67, 14-17. Cf. *Od.* IX 22.

¹³⁵ J I 24, 13; 37, 13-15; 332, 3-16; Ep. X P 37, 24; Ep. XIX P 65, 7-8 and 25-26; Ep. XX P 68, 7-14.

¹³⁶ J II 72,26 - 73,17.

ploying such allusiveness in polished writings that it deserves more than passing notice. St. Gregory is writing to a person who is known to be something of an enthusiast about pagan literature and who has been his benefactor. Hence the Bishop finds himself in the dilemma of desiring to please this friend by writing a letter couched in the elegant allusive style which he knows will gratify his friend's taste, while at the same time adhering to the position of aloofness from pagan culture which he feels he must maintain in keeping with the temper of the Christian times.¹³⁷ We find him solving the difficulty by apologizing at the outset for his lavish employment of a pagan author, Homer, on the ground that his correspondent, by reason of his preoccupation with pagan literature, would have found quite beyond his comprehension the Scriptural texts which St. Gregory would have preferred to use.

The letter turns out to be a graceful analogy based upon the *Odyssey*.¹³⁸ St. Gregory likens himself to Laertes joyfully perceiving Odysseus and Telemachus vying in valor. His correspondent is Telemachus, and his correspondent's father, Gregory's spiritual son, is Odysseus. The rivalry in this case between "Telemachus" and "Odysseus" is with respect to the honor and kindness they have shown to the Bishop of Nyssa. The latter declares that as judge he will be pleasing to both contestants, for he will award first prize to both. He concludes by depicting graphically with many Homeric allusions the "roughness" of his "Ithaca"¹³⁹ the hardships of which have been somewhat lightened by the letters and kindness of his "Telemachus" and "Odysseus."

b. Suggestions of Other Poets

After the manner of other men of the times St. Gregory shows allusiveness to the poets in fugitive references like the following which do not conclusively indicate first hand knowledge of their works.

¹³⁷ Cf. p. 94 *supra*.

¹³⁸ Ep. XI P 38-40. Cf. *Od.* XXIV 514 ff. In this letter there are also allusions to other sections of the *Odyssey*. Cf. P 39 and 40, notes.

¹³⁹ Just where he was when he wrote this is doubtful. Cf. chap. IV note 31 *infra*.

Very evidently striving consciously for elegance in a letter to the sophist Libanius, he incorporates what he claims to be a quotation from Pindar. Gratefully referring to a letter that he has received from his correspondent he says that it is as precious to him as gold, that gold "which is rated higher than all riches by them that possess understanding, actually 'the fairest gift,' according to Pindar."¹⁴⁰

Two allusions in the *Contra Eunomium* may be based upon quotations from Euripides, but there is nothing to indicate that St. Gregory was conscious of their authorship and therefore that he knew Euripides at first hand. From the context it seems more likely that they were current expressions—practically proverbs—in his day, or else culled by him from the compendia then available.¹⁴¹

A single additional reminiscence from the poets in the *Letters* and the *Contra Eunomium* is the peculiar expression "caught by one's own wings" which is found once in each of these works.¹⁴² It is so similar to a fragment of Aeschylus¹⁴³ that a connection between the two seems likely. However, St. Gregory does not give any indication that he is aware that he is quoting from Aeschylus. Possibly the fragment was current in the fourth century as an aphorism. Its very survival as a fragment lends credence to this supposition.¹⁴⁴

Taken as a whole the references to pagan letters which have been assembled in the preceding pages are scanty and vague and

¹⁴⁰ P 44, 19-22. The quotation is not found in the text of Pindar as we have it today. It is found verbatim, however, among the extant remains of Euripides' *Danaë* in fragment 324 as preserved by Athanaeus and Stobaeus among others. Cf. Nauck, 456-457, who gives a plausible explanation of St. Gregory's attributing the words to Pindar by calling attention to the fact that Lucian's *Timon* contains the exact words of the passage in question juxtaposed with lines plainly reminiscent of Pindar *Ol.* i 1, but without identifying authors. Because of the casual character of St. Gregory's "quotation" nevertheless it is not possible to conclude from it, however entertaining it may be to speculate, whether or not he knew Pindar or Euripides at first hand, or was misled by the allusiveness of Lucian.

¹⁴¹ J I 23, 26-27 and 251, 18. Cf. Jaeger's notes ad loc.

¹⁴² Ep. XIX P 64, 17-18; J II 194, 18-21.

¹⁴³ *Fr.* 139 Nauck 45.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. *ibid.* for a list of ancient authors making a similar use of the quotation.

decorative except in the case of allusions to the philosophers employed for his polemical purposes. Some illustrate the attitude of aloofness toward pagan literature which the Church Fathers of the fourth century were at pains to maintain with some consistency,¹⁴⁵ while others indicate that St. Gregory, like other educated men of the day, had sufficient familiarity with pagan letters to make use of them in embellishing his own writings.

4. Traditional Lore

The same decorative allusiveness characterizes his few commonplace references to myth and legend.¹⁴⁶ It is relieved in one instance, however, by some learned lumber. He refers to the Peneus as the river "which, they say, overflowing its banks at the sides, by its rich streams creates the famous plain for the Thessalians." He seems here to be confusing the traditions found in Herodotus¹⁴⁷ and Strabo¹⁴⁸ among others, regarding the Peneus, with the facts about such rivers as the Nile.¹⁴⁹

The traditional Alexander turns up once in the *Letters*. Alexander, he tells a correspondent, is admired by the wise "not so much for defeating the Medes or the Indians and for his tales about the ocean, as for saying he had his treasure in his friends."¹⁵⁰

5. Alexandrianism

Such gratuitous display of erudition as the above references to traditional lore is but one of the Alexandrian traits traces of which persist, it is interesting to note, in a writer like St. Gregory so typical of his times in so many respects.¹⁵¹ Other characteristics savoring of Alexandrianism are: humanitarianism in references

¹⁴⁵ Cf. pp. 92 ff. *supra*.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. e.g., J I 27, 18-20; 116, 7-9; 251, 25-28; 337-338; 389, 17-25; J II 166, 15-18; Ep. XIX P 65, 7-9; Ep. XX P 66, 16-18; Ep. XXVII P 82, 11-13. For similar allusions of St. Augustine cf. Marrou 129-131.

¹⁴⁷ VII 129.

¹⁴⁸ IX 430.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Ep. XX P 66, 18 - 67, 2, and note on line 19.

¹⁵⁰ Ep. VIII P 35, 11-16.

¹⁵¹ Another example: Ep. XXVIII P 83, 1-5.

to parental love for children,¹⁵² the recounting of tall tales with an air of credibility,¹⁵³ a love of nature,¹⁵⁴ and above all the allusiveness to which attention has been called so often in the preceding section of this monograph.

E. NOTIONS ON LANGUAGE

In the *Contra Eunomium* St. Gregory remarks in the course of a rather lengthy illustration, that the number of languages cannot easily be enumerated,¹⁵⁵ and that objects have different names among different nations each of which prefers its own appellation for a given object to that of the other nations. Quaintly he enumerates: the Egyptian thinks his superior to the Greek; the Syrian his, to the Hebrew; the Roman his, to all of them and likewise the Mede.¹⁵⁶ Commonplace and obvious though these observations may be to the modern mind, the fourth century frankly found them and others like them provocative of lively theorizing. St. Gregory and not a few of his educated contemporaries shared in the curiosity which had plagued many minds before their time regarding the nature and relationship of languages. Speculation about the origin of languages particularly intrigued them and numerous were the naïve comments on that subject.¹⁵⁷

St. Gregory subscribes to the theory that "as long as the manner of life was the same for all and men had not yet been divided into many different nations, the aggregate of all men lived together and had one language." He is somewhat vague as to how this one language became many, simply concluding that when men scattered over the face of the earth they "adopted various kinds of speech and language."¹⁵⁸ This conception of a single language as the

¹⁵² e.g., J I 29, 11-13 and 333, 19-21.

¹⁵³ e.g., the account of a cure effected by the hearing of good news: Ep. XIII P 42, 6-13; the tale of a megalomaniac who set fire to a building in Ephesus in order to gain notoriety; J I 39, 6-17.

¹⁵⁴ Especially as shown in Epistles X XII XIII XIX XX; cf. Müller 84.

¹⁵⁵ J I 286, 29 - 287, 2.

¹⁵⁶ J I 330, 3-19; cf. 285, 19-21; 292, 21-24.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. Pedersen 1-5.

¹⁵⁸ J I 287, 2-16.

source of the others was by no means uncommon in antiquity, but instead of thinking of the mother tongue as a primitive language long extinct in its original form, they found no difficulty in the notion that the source of all languages could be discovered in a language still living at that time. St. Gregory's ideas on the latter phase of the problem cannot be learned from the works now being considered, but it is not likely that his knowledge in such a matter was ahead of his times, especially when one considers the difficulties then confronting linguistic research.¹⁵⁹

The theory that languages are of divine origin had some adherents in the fourth century. Among them was Eunomius apparently, for he put the notion into requisition for his polemic. In answer St. Gregory, unfurling the standard of a contrary school of thought, flatly declares, "Human language is the invention of the human understanding."¹⁶⁰ Again, "things are named . . . in conformity with the nature and qualities inherent in each."¹⁶¹ Further, he assigns Plato's *Cratylus* as a source of some of Eunomius' erroneous notions on the origin of language.¹⁶²

He states with approval in the same *Contra Eunomium*, however, that there is current among certain students of the Holy Scriptures in his day the theory that the Hebrew language is not as old as the others, but was improvised by a miracle for the Hebrews after the sojourn in Egypt.¹⁶³ Since he regards it as plausible to assume an exceptional origin in the case of language of the chosen people of God, he uses this hypothesis also to advantage for his polemics.

Prompted by his zealous desire to refute Eunomius, in several instances he very carefully defines the meaning of words, having as his authority, as he says, "those who use the expression correctly and have been trained carefully in the use of words."¹⁶⁴ This was the only court of appeal possible for him, since the

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Pedersen 3 and 5.

¹⁶⁰ J I 287 *passim* and esp. lines 18-19. For a reiteration of the same idea, cf. 327, 11-15; 329-332 *passim*; 284, 24-29; J II 168, 22-31.

¹⁶¹ J I 292, 21-22.

¹⁶² J I 329, 23-26.

¹⁶³ J I 288, 7-15. Cf. Jaeger's note ad loc.

¹⁶⁴ J I 258, 29 - 259, 5. Cf. also 293, 12-21; J II 9, 6-16; 93, 28-29.

fourth century had, of course, no widely recognized standard set up in such matters.

Many circumstances militated against setting up a standard language in fourth century Cappadocia, and perhaps one of the most aggravating of these was the confused language situation. By the third century a cleavage had developed in the plateau of Asia Minor in that the mass of the people spoke a local tongue and the educated spoke and wrote Greek.¹⁶⁵ St. Gregory attests by implication the persisting multi-lingualism in Cappadocia in his day in a reference where he enumerates the different names given to the heavens by various nations. He explicitly says, "We name it οὐρανός," and then goes on to assert that another name is given it by the Cappadocians among others.¹⁶⁶ Cappadocia, then, must have had a native non-Greek tongue side by side with Greek in his day. Besides giving the Greek name he also quotes the Hebrew and the Latin appellations, but transliterated into the Greek alphabet. It is interesting to note that he does not cite the Cappadocian word at all. The preference for Greek as a vehicle for literary expression implied by these items is evident again in a letter to Libanius the sophist, and it appears that Libanius concurs in these sentiments. It may also be inferred that a non-Greek language—which one is not clear—was then gaining the ascendancy over Greek to some extent at least. "I say that it does not abound in good judgment," he declares, "if some err in deserting to the foreign tongue from the Greek, both becoming mercenary soldiers and choosing the food of soldiers instead of the fame of oratory, on this account for you to condemn oratory and give sentence of speechlessness for your life."¹⁶⁷

It is noteworthy that St. Gregory incidentally witnesses to the fourth century pronunciation of the Latin c as Greek χ in "caelum" when he transliterates the word as χαίλουμ.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁵ Cf. CAH XI 611. On the local languages of the people in Asia Minor especially in Galatia in the fourth century cf. Müller 68-75 and bibliography there cited.

¹⁶⁶ J I 330, 3-9.

¹⁶⁷ Ep. XIV P 45, 14-19.

¹⁶⁸ All the MSS agree on the χ, but not on the αι for ae. See crit. app. ad loc.

The ancient world was not only interested in the problems of the origin and relationships of languages but it delighted in accounting for the derivation of individual words by a combination of ingenuity, imagination and naïveté. After the manner of this "etymology" of his times St. Gregory explains how *θεός* is derived from the same root as *θεῶσθαι*.¹⁶⁹ Similarly he declares, "and from the word *εἶναι* has been formed the derivative *τοῦ ὄντος*."¹⁷⁰

An allusion to language as composed of nouns, verbs, and conjunctions¹⁷¹ is interesting because it seems to reflect a view of language dating back to Aristotle and the Peripatetic School despite subsequent advances in the knowledge of grammar up to the fourth century A. D. The reference is too casual, however, to permit the conclusion that St. Gregory like so many others in antiquity continued to follow in matters of the kind the teachings vested with the authority of Aristotle, even when they had been outmoded by the superior work of others.¹⁷²

F. SCIENCE

It is trite to recall that science in its present-day connotation has been a post-Renaissance preoccupation and therefore something quite different from fourth century "science." Commonplace though the observation may be, there is need to reflect briefly upon it at the outset of this section in order to obtain the proper perspective upon the evidences of fourth century notions on science herein assembled. Valuable discoveries had been made and the horizon of knowledge widened in various fields, especially in astronomy and mathematics, previous to the fourth century. But the results of these investigations were as a rule not easy of access by reason of the physical obstacles in the way of the multiplication of written works. Besides, investigation was not yet conditioned by the scientific method, nor was there as yet an adequate scientific background into which newly discovered facts could be

¹⁶⁹ J I 379,24 - 380,2. Cf. Boisacq s.v. On the etymology of antiquity cf. Pedersen 3-5.

¹⁷⁰ J II 248, 2-4. Cf. Boisacq s.v. *εἶναι*.

¹⁷¹ J I 282, 20-21.

¹⁷² Cf. Sandys I 97-98; 138-140.

fitted. By the fourth century, of course, there was little or nothing original being done any longer in the way of scientific research. Instead men toyed with theories, or remnants of theories, from a more productive past, or conjured up fanciful hypotheses of their own. The criteria for accepting or rejecting speculations on scientific matters were such arbitrary considerations as their apparent common sense, or their adaptability for exegesis, or the authority of the author.¹⁷³

St. Gregory like so many of his contemporaries in the field of letters practiced a great deal of allusiveness to scientific data.¹⁷⁴ As an educated man he would be expected to have a general knowledge of contemporary "science." His allusions in the *Contra Eunomium* and in the *Letters* are cursory gleanings of the scientific notions of the time as he might come across them in general circulation whether in compendia of such knowledge or elsewhere. He makes these references frankly with no pretence to be a man of science. "Scientific observation by the dioptra is not the prerogative of all men," he asserts.¹⁷⁵ But it is a curious commentary on his times that even so he did not hesitate to speculate about matters in the realm of science and to use random theories as illustrations. These casual allusions, diversified and numerous as they are, form a worth-while source of information about the non-professional scientific knowledge of Gregory's day.¹⁷⁶ They also throw some light on scientific allusiveness as a contemporary mannerism.

¹⁷³ Cf. Dampier 71-72; 141-142.

¹⁷⁴ The Christian Fathers were not interested in science for science's sake, but it was necessary for them to obtain a sufficient amount of scientific information to refute pagan arguments and to interpret the first chapter of Genesis, etc. Cf. Sarton I 359. On the influence of the Hexaemeral literature cf. Neuburger II, 78 note 1.

¹⁷⁵ J I 370, 15-22. On the dioptra, an instrument for measuring the apparent diameter of the sun, cf. Reymond 84.

¹⁷⁶ A detailed study of the sources of St. Gregory's scientific knowledge as well as an evaluation of it are beyond the scope of the present work. An account is here given of the *Letters* and the *Contra Eunomium* insofar as they are depositories of that knowledge. On the essentially superficial character of the knowledge of science of the educated man in late antiquity cf. Marrou 112 ff.; Thorndike 493.

Though not a student of science for science's sake, St. Gregory manifests an interest typical of his contemporaries regarding natural phenomena which it is the province of science to explain. In an interesting passage in the *Contra Eunomium* he enumerates some of the problems which puzzled him and incidentally his contemporaries: why some things are always still, others, moving; why, among the latter, some things which are in motion move according to a fixed plan, such as the heavens and the planets, while others like the air and the sea move at random; what the nature is of heat and cold, of dryness and moisture, and of the variation of plants and fruits.¹⁷⁷ St. Gregory has no quarrel with men of science, nor does he try to assign a miraculous cause to explain natural phenomena however much they provoke his wonder. He prefers to admit his own inability to give an explanation, and likewise, if such be the case, the inability even of contemporary scientific men to do so. After detailing and pointing out the inadequacy of several theories purporting to explain the movement of the heavenly bodies, he lists a number of questions about the source and composition of the light of the stars and similar matters and concludes: "Will anyone be so opposed to reason as to promise the explanation of such things? For nothing else is left to those who are right-minded for a reply than this: that He alone Who made all things in His wisdom knows the explanation of creation."¹⁷⁸

The assertion in one of his letters that "the signal for a shower (of rain) was given to the air by God"¹⁷⁹ is in no sense a denial of the validity of the scientific explanation, since in another context he accounts for rain-fall after the manner of the scientists of his day. Such references to God belong to a mode of expression borrowed from the Bible where the phenomena of nature are constantly ascribed to the direct intervention of God in each individual instance.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ J I 137, 7-20. Cf. Thorndike 486-494.

¹⁷⁸ J I 238,21 - 239,5. Cf. 235-239 *passim*.

¹⁷⁹ Ep. VI P 32,19 - 33,11.

¹⁸⁰ Dorlotodot 43, 115-116.

1. Astronomy

"The substance of the heavens is uncertain on account of the various opinions regarding it of the different natural philosophers according to the light of each on the subject,"¹⁸¹ he asserts, unwittingly attesting the confusion prevailing in the scientific field in his day. He tells us how he wonders at beholding "the periodical revolution of the universe and the harmonious movement of the planets in a reverse direction." In the same passage he incidentally reveals that he is aware that stars and planets differ in size and seem to move in a fixed orbit yearly; also that eclipses of these and of the sun occur by reason of this movement; and that the four seasons of the year are caused by the amount of distance of the sun from the earth, though he shares the common error of his times that it is the sun which moves. This erroneous view witnesses to the enduring influence of Aristotle, for although the latter had established the idea of the sphericity of the earth, he also held to the geocentric theory. His authority was largely instrumental until the sixteenth century in discrediting the heliocentric theory, though it was advanced by Aristarchus as early as the third century B. C.¹⁸² If St. Gregory is aware that many of his notions on science stem from Aristotle, he makes no mention of it, a procedure consistent with the attitude he manifests toward Aristotle as a philosopher.

Eclipses of the sun occur, St. Gregory continues, "when the body of the moon, as they say, gets in the way." The parenthetical observation shows he is not too sure this is the correct explanation¹⁸³ and that, as has been stated above, he makes no pretensions to being a man of science himself. It is "the zodiac engraven obliquely on the vault by which they who are learned in these respects observe the movement of the heavenly bodies revolving in an opposite direction."¹⁸⁴

¹⁸¹ J I 146, 1-3. For the additional ideas on astronomy in this and the following paragraph cf. 236,14 - 237,17.

¹⁸² Dampier 36-40, 48-50. Cf. Reymond 169. On the development of the idea of the sphericity of the earth up to and including the time of Aristotle cf. Kretschmer 35-36.

¹⁸³ Cf. Reymond 160; Diels I 301, 47.

¹⁸⁴ For the zodiac cf. Reymond 10 ff.

In the theories which he mentions to explain the mechanism of the celestial movements it is easy to see the influence of Neo-Platonism, Platonism (especially the *Timaeus*) and ultimately of the Pythagorean school. One theory represents the heavens as a hollow sphere revolving about the earth, and held securely within a second body of similar shape which prevents it from being carried off in a straight line as it turns. St. Gregory sees several difficulties here. Will not friction cause one or the other to be worn away in time? And how can the motion of the inner body be maintained if the outer be perfectly rigid? And again, how is the outer one kept immovable and not affected by the motion of the inner? If this, he says, is fixed firmly in a base, then what holds the base and what that, leading, of course, to an absurdity.¹⁸⁵

St. Gregory denies the validity of this theory and proceeds to expound another which he shows to be equally absurd, namely that as some say, "a void has been poured about the back of the heavens, and slipping and falling upon this, the whirling of the universe turns upon itself, finding no resistance from any solid body capable of stopping it. . . ." ¹⁸⁶

In common with many educated men of his day he apparently subscribed to the then by no means universally approved idea of the sphericity of the earth, though he thinks of the earth as the center of the universe, for he tells us that as the ever-revolving vault of the heavens turns it carries the light to the opposite side of the earth which obstructs the light by its bulk. Darkness results on the earth until the moving heavens bring back the light. The measure of time in which this happens is day and night.¹⁸⁷

The sun interested and fascinated the Bishop of Nyssa as it has many a man before him and since his time. He is very vague as to its exact nature¹⁸⁸ but recognizes the undoubted fact that the light and heat given off by the sun are tempered by the air

¹⁸⁵ J I 237,17 - 238,7.

¹⁸⁶ J I 238, 7-21.

¹⁸⁷ J I 294, 17-28. St. Gregory also expresses the idea of the sphericity and immobility of the earth in *de Hominis Opificio*, PG XLIV 128 C - D. Cf. Agar 28-32. For other notions of the early Christian era regarding the shape of the earth cf. Robbins 59 ff.

¹⁸⁸ J II 180, 7-15.

intervening between the sun and the earth;¹⁸⁹ also that sunlight is necessary for the growth of plants, though it alone does not suffice for this. He recognizes that a good soil is likewise essential.¹⁹⁰

As mentioned above, St. Gregory knew that the four seasons result from the varying distance of the sun from the earth in the course of a year, but he considered the earth as stationary while the sun moves in a fixed course which he describes as rising higher in the sky day by day from the winter solstice to the vernal equinox and beyond.¹⁹¹ Though he does not mention the summer solstice, it is plain that he realizes it exists and that after it the sun's apparent course daily moves lower toward the horizon until the winter solstice. He specifically tells us that "It is customary with the Romans to celebrate a festival at about the winter solstice according to the practice of their ancestors, when as the sun moves back into its upper position, the span of day begins to increase in length and the beginning of the month is esteemed as holy."¹⁹² He describes the vernal equinox quite accurately as the time when "The luminary is already at the mid-point in its orbit so that both night and day measure out their span equally with one another."¹⁹³

He likewise recognizes that the light of the moon is borrowed from the sun and gives an accurate account of the fairly common phenomenon of sunrise occurring while the full moon is still shining brightly in the sky.¹⁹⁴

There is one casual reference to astrology, used by way of illustration. He alludes to it as "this vain deceit" thus revealing a hostile attitude toward it, an attitude typical of that of the churchmen of his day toward astrology which then enjoyed great popularity with the vast majority of both pagans and Christians.¹⁹⁵

¹⁸⁹ J I 333, 12-16.

¹⁹⁰ J I 133,28 - 134,2. Cf. also J II 33, 17-22.

¹⁹¹ J I 237, 3-5 and Ep. IV P 25-28 *passim*.

¹⁹² Ep. XIV P 44, 8-11. Cf. also Ep. IV 25, 20-22 and 26,25 - 27,1.

¹⁹³ Ep. IV P 26, 1-4.

¹⁹⁴ P 28, 8-17. Other commonplace references to the sun, used by way of illustration, and with no particular significance for this monograph, are as follows: J I 44,27 - 45,12; 83, 23-26; 172, 11-15; Ep. III P 21, 22-27; Ep. XIV P 46, 1-2; Ep. XVIII P 56, 19-20.

¹⁹⁵ J II 268, 4-11. Cf. Dampier 42-43. It is interesting to note that later some Mediaeval Churchmen in good standing committed the error of regarding astrology as a true science. Cf. Agar 15-16.

2. Botany

By way of illustration St. Gregory makes several observations which are of interest because they give an idea of the sort of botanical information possessed by a typical educated man of the fourth century. He declares, for instance, that the plants growing on the earth in his day have developed by a succession of seeds from the first plants created,¹⁹⁶ and that seeds always produce their own kind.¹⁹⁷

In another illustration he shows that he has the correct notion of the part played by the moisture in the soil and by the sun in the growth of the vine and the production of grapes. The moisture "is drawn out of the root through the stem by the pith," he tells us, and though it is but water, as it proceeds higher in the plant, is transformed by the agency of the sun into the wine which the fruit of the vine ultimately produces.¹⁹⁸

A specific reference to the grafting of fruit trees is made in Letter XX.¹⁹⁹ Whether what St. Gregory observed in the varieties of the peach tree where, he says, "nature ruled by art" has brought about variations of the peach similar to the almond and the nectarine, was really the result of grafting cannot be determined with certainty. Methods of grafting were understood and practiced well before his day so there is no difficulty on the score of the ability of the gardeners to have produced hybrids by grafting.²⁰⁰ But the phenomenon he describes may just as well have been the result of plant mutation or variation about which the Bishop of Nyssa probably was ignorant, since it has been recognized and studied only in modern times as far as we know.²⁰¹ At

¹⁹⁶ J I 369, 27-30. Cf. Darwin I 316-341 *passim*.

¹⁹⁷ In other words by planting the seed of a pea plant one cannot expect to grow beans. He is not aware, however, of the possibility of seed sports within a single species. Cf. Gager 963.

¹⁹⁸ J II 33, 12-30.

¹⁹⁹ Ep. XX P 68, 17-20.

²⁰⁰ "Rustica res" DS IV 925-926. Cf. Darwin I 404 ff.

²⁰¹ Cf. Gager 963. For a good discussion of the production of almonds and of nectarines by peach trees and vice versa, see also Darwin, 350-357, esp. 354, where the results of careful research are summed up by the following statement: "With respect to the more curious case of full-grown peach trees

any rate, by his observation St. Gregory displays once again the tendency of one fourth century man which we have noted before, to attach a natural explanation to what seems marvelous to him in nature.

The restricted character of his knowledge is again witnessed by the naïve statement that the fruitfulness and productiveness of the earth in the spring is the result of breezes blowing upon it and infusing these qualities into it from the air.²⁰²

3. Geography

St. Gregory's two references which contain geographical data indicate that he had the general notions current in his day regarding geography, based probably upon the works of Strabo, Poseidonius, Ptolemy, and the like.²⁰³ He asks who does not know that the extremities of the earth are uninhabited because some parts are dry and burnt up beyond measure on account of their excessive nearness to the heat of the sun, while others abound in moisture and cold on account of their excessive distance from the sun. Only those parts are inhabited which are equally distant from these extremes.²⁰⁴ In the second reference, while the ancient practice of sweeping geographical allusiveness is evident, the items seem based upon precise geographical knowledge. He sweeps mentally from "Syria and the country between the rivers up to the boundaries toward the barbarians;" and then from "Phoenicia and Palestine and Arabia and Egypt and the tribes of Libya to the end of the civilized world;" and then from "Pontus and the Cilicians, Lycians, Lydians, Pisidians, Pamphylians, Carians, islanders of the Hellespont, up to the Propontis itself," and to "the

suddenly producing nectarines by bud-variation (or sports as they are called by gardeners) the evidence is superabundant; there is also good evidence of the same tree producing both peaches and nectarines or half-and-half fruit. By this term I mean a fruit with the one half a perfect peach and the other a perfect nectarine." Cf. also *ibid.* 389-390, 426-433; p. 5 *supra*.

²⁰² Ep. XII P 40, 22-24.

²⁰³ For a brief but well documented summary of these, cf. Tozer, *A History of Ancient Geography*. In more detail, Bunbury.

²⁰⁴ J II 14, 7-14. That part of the globe which is south of the equator was, of course, unknown to the ancients.

tribes of Thrace as far as Thrace extends, and the nations about it up to the Danube itself."²⁰⁵

4. Mathematics

There are a few rather indifferent references to mathematics used by way of illustration. The making of a circle with its equal radii in plane geometry is described in some detail.²⁰⁶ The use of rules of different sizes for measurement is alluded to in another illustration.²⁰⁷ In a third instance the method of proceeding by multiplication from units to tens to hundreds to thousands illustrates a point which St. Gregory wishes to make clear.²⁰⁸ Such casual references as these are not, of course, illuminating to any great degree, but from them we may gather that with regard to the then available mathematics St. Gregory had the cursory knowledge considered desirable in an educated man of his day.

5. Physics

As in the other sciences St. Gregory's knowledge of physics seems to have been guided by the teachings of the natural philosophers which were in general circulation and especially by the views popularized by Aristotle.²⁰⁹ Thus the phenomenon of heaviness was generally explained in his day by attributing the quality to something innate in an object which made it tend downward. St. Gregory plainly held this notion.²¹⁰ He makes one allusion to the use of a plumb-line in keeping objects straight.²¹¹ He explains very concisely how, when a heavy object falls into water, some air

²⁰⁵ J I 65,23 - 66,2.

²⁰⁶ J I 208, 20-27.

²⁰⁷ J I 124,21 - 125,1.

²⁰⁸ J I 336, 2-12. Another illustration may be a reference to an axiom in geometry: J I 318, 26-28. For a brief summary of the mathematical sciences in ancient times cf. Reymond 111-156, and Laurand Ap. I 5-37.

²⁰⁹ The persistence of these views through the Middle Ages forms an interesting chapter in the history of science. Cf. Dampier 36-37.

²¹⁰ J I 140, 17-20; J II 286, 11-15; 290, 21-27.

²¹¹ J II 93, 24-25.

is pulled down with it but as air is light it rushes upward, sometimes raising up some of the water with it and forming a bubble.²¹²

From the time of Aristotle it has been known that sound travels by means of sound waves in the air.²¹³ St. Gregory states that it is not possible for sound to be made unless it is "condensed in air."²¹⁴ It is interesting to note that he appears to realize that lightning precedes thunder and that the flash has a definite connection with the noise.²¹⁵

He attributes to the natural philosophers the notion that the winds are formed from smokes and exhalations.²¹⁶ A cloud, he says, is a kind of rather thin vapor diffused through the air and because of its thinness and lightness riding upon the wind in the air. As it moves it becomes compressed and falls as drops of rain.²¹⁷

By way of illustration he mentions the fact that iron is a good conductor of both heat and cold.²¹⁸

He alludes to the doctrine of the four elements in the jargon popularized by Aristotle and others. "Heat and cold, dry and moist" are contraries of one another, according to St. Gregory, and mutually destructive of one another.²¹⁹ Earth and air are characterized as follows: "The former is solid, and stable, and resistant, and of downward tendency, and heavy, while air has a nature made up of opposite qualities."²²⁰

"Fire and water," he says, "have a nature destructive of one another and each equally is destroyed when it comes within the other by the prevalence of the one which is more abundant."²²¹

²¹² He calls it a "thin membrane-like appearance." J II 124,28 - 125,4. Another description of bubbles is found in J II 159, 14-18.

²¹³ Cf. Reymond 177; Laurand Ap. I 86.

²¹⁴ J I 273,32 - 274,5. Cf. 229, 14-17.

²¹⁵ Ep. VI P 32, 11-12. Whether he recognizes that light travels more quickly than sound is not apparent.

²¹⁶ J I 109, 14-16.

²¹⁷ J II 14,18 - 15,3. Cf. Jaeger's note ad loc. for a discussion of sources.

²¹⁸ J I 104, 17-21. Cf. Laurand Ap. I 82.

²¹⁹ J II 92, 10-16. Cf. Laurand Ap. I 96.

²²⁰ J II 167, 16-23. Similar ideas in J I 212, 12-18.

²²¹ J II 167, 2-4. Similarly, J I 147, 21-26; 167,31 - 168,5; 212, 12-18; 292,29 - 293,1.

He enumerates some of the facts about fire which puzzle him and incidentally his contemporaries: how it is that sticks, when rubbed against each other, produce fire; how fire can be struck from a stone; why iron grows red hot in a blaze; why fire is continually moving upward; how it is that it consumes all the fuel laid upon it; why different substances are affected variously by it; bronze melts, clay hardens, wax is used up.²²²

It is interesting but not surprising that he manifests an attitude of scorn for those who subscribe to the atomic theory of the Epicureans, characterizing it as foolishness. In his day the theory of atoms was still relegated by most people to the oblivion into which it had been cast by the condemnation pronounced upon it by Plato and Aristotle.²²³ It is noteworthy that this is the only instance of hostility expressed by him toward natural philosophers.

It may be remarked that some of the items in the preceding section would to-day come under the category of chemistry, but that science was, of course, practically unknown to ancient times.²²⁴

6. Zoology

It is apparent from two references in the *Contra Eunomium* that St. Gregory held the erroneous belief current in his day regarding the spontaneous generation of lower animals from (as he says) "decay of moist elements" or "from a change of liquids, or the corruption of seeds, or the putrefaction of wood, or out of the compression of the fire which changes the chill vapor left in the depths of the firebrands and issuing from them, to the kind of animal which they call a salamander."²²⁵

By way of illustration he frequently refers to the natural process of generation and birth of human beings and of animals, making use of information of that general and casual sort which could have been obtained either from observation and hearsay or from written sources available to him.²²⁶

²²² J I 249, 6-18; 133, 21-26.

²²³ J I 250,29 - 251,4. On the origins of the atomic theory cf. Dampier 25-28 and 35-36.

²²⁴ Cf. Laurand Ap. I 103-113; Dampier 79.

²²⁵ J I 306, 2-10 and J II 186, 7-15. On the salamander cf. p. 18 *supra*.

²²⁶ J I 22, 6-10; 134, 6-9; 149, 7-21; 150, 21-26; 197,24 - 198,2; J II 185, 22-24; 188, 9-13; 213, 22-25; 331, 3-5.

7. Medicine

References to matters within the province of medical science bulk large in the works of the Church Fathers.²²⁷ These allusions considered of themselves are, of course, of little practical value to the medical man; in fact they are often enough rather a source of amusement to him. They have, however, a two-fold value to the historian; first, as witnessing to the amount and kind of medical knowledge current in the fourth century among the educated; and second, as testimony to some of the diseases then to be observed and the remedies employed.²²⁸

St. Gregory's references to medical science fall conveniently under the following headings: Disease and Its Cure, Drugs and Poisons, Anatomy, Physiology.²²⁹ Even figurative allusions of a medical nature which had by the fourth century become common-places of Christian thought have been included in this study, not only for the sake of greater completeness, but also because even these references must have reflected in some way contemporary usage. It is not my purpose to investigate the sources of St. Gregory's medical knowledge. Such a study should include all St. Gregory's works, and I am dealing with only the *Letters* and the *Contra Eunomium*. Besides, the scope of such an investigation is too great to make it feasible to treat it as a part of such a study as the present one. My purpose here is simply to report on the *Letters* and the *Contra Eunomium* as depositories of St. Gregory's medical knowledge. Since he was neither a physician nor a student of medical science, such a report gives incidental information as well about the non-professional medical knowledge current in the fourth century.

a. Disease and Its Cure

An allusion to disease and lameness gives us the incidental information that St. Gregory recognized that they proceed from

²²⁷ Cf. Neuburger II, 39 ff. For a brief but informative summary of the medical knowledge of St. Gregory and other Church Fathers cf. *ibid.* 75-80.

²²⁸ Cf. Keenan (2) 466-471; (1) 27; Fox 14-16.

²²⁹ For references to the profession of Physician cf. pp. 22 ff. *supra*.

natural causes.²³⁰ One of the symptoms of a bodily disorder or of some pestilential and stubborn sickness is a disgusting and foul-smelling breath, he tells us.²³¹ The science of medicine is "ineffectual in the case of those overcome by the disease of cancer, because the disease is more powerful than the (healing) art."²³²

Disease of the eyes is alluded to several times.²³³ There is a reference to the fact that at least one disease of the eyes was considered contagious.²³⁴ One allusion implies that blindness was attributed to a natural cause.²³⁵ The condition of crossed eyes is mentioned once.²³⁶

St. Gregory mentions several other diseases by name. Paralysis, he says, is characterized by the lack of ability to coordinate a limb with the other members of the body.²³⁷ Healthy people, he tells us elsewhere, have a natural aversion for the disease of leprosy.²³⁸ Men also loathe, he declares, "swollen and noisome ulcers," and find it hard to look at those whose appearance has been altered by warts or growths "resulting from a kind of plethoric, heavy humor."²³⁹ In an illustration there is the implication that bandages were sometimes used to cover a countenance marred by some disease.²⁴⁰

St. Gregory also mentions a disease which he does not name but characterizes as "strange" the symptoms of which are convulsions in which the patient leaps and falls down.²⁴¹

²³⁰ Ep. III P 22, 20-23. On the fourth century attitude toward disease, cf. p. 73 *supra*.

²³¹ J II 111, 23 - 112, 1.

²³² J II 164, 21-23.

²³³ Of all the medical specializations the best developed in antiquity was that of oculist. Cf. "Medicus" DS III 1678-1679.

²³⁴ J I 28, 19-21. Another reference also implies a knowledge of the danger of contagion in some diseases: Ep. II P 13, 20-21.

²³⁵ J I 342, 27-30.

²³⁶ J II 194, 14-18. There are two additional casual references to disease of the eyes: J I 45, 3-5 and J II 88, 12-15.

²³⁷ J II 91, 26-29.

²³⁸ J I 53, 16-21. Leprosy is also mentioned in J II 217, 5-6.

²³⁹ J I 375, 28-31. There is an additional reference to a swelling containing fluid: J II 317, 17-19.

²⁴⁰ J I 138, 25-29.

²⁴¹ J II 194, 14-18.

Allusion also is made to diseases of the mind. The patient afflicted with phrenitis,²⁴² a form of delirium, is angry at his physician and fights and struggles with the man who is trying to cure him.²⁴³ Sometimes he imagines he is wrestling with an opponent and goes through all the motions of throwing his antagonist.²⁴⁴ Another mental disease to which St. Gregory alludes is melancholy.²⁴⁵

The curious tale which St. Gregory relates of the megalomaniac who performed a crime of arson in order to gain notoriety is another instance of an allusion to a mental affliction. The story may, or may not, have a basis of fact, for he gives its source as hearsay, but it provides an interesting item of psychological analysis to add to our synthesis of fourth century life.²⁴⁶

A reference is made to the fact that fainting might result from a person's being pressed upon by a crowd.²⁴⁷

The healing art, according to St. Gregory, is a gift of God which human nature has gradually discovered how to use.²⁴⁸ His references in the *Letters* and the *Contra Eunomium* imply that it was held in good repute in his day. The physician, he says, is called "kind and beneficent and such qualities as these."²⁴⁹ In the process of curing a malady the physician touches his patient but does not become infected thereby himself, he states.²⁵⁰ He relates the story which he says a physician had told him of a man whom medical science failed to cure of disease, but who was cured by hearing good news. Before his cure the patient "railed at the art of medicine as being less effective than it was reputed to be."²⁵¹ St. Gregory admits he is not sure how to explain this cure.

²⁴² Cf. Neuburger I 391-392. See also Jones *Hippocrates* I lix.

²⁴³ J I 21, 27 - 22, 2. The case where a patient struggles against the physician is also mentioned in Ep. XIX P 64, 24 - 65, 4.

²⁴⁴ J I 159, 28-30. Other references to the same disease are found in J I 374, 26-27; 305, 20; J II 118, 16-19.

²⁴⁵ J I 22, 2-4. Cf. Jones *Hippocrates* I, lviii.

²⁴⁶ J I 39, 6-17.

²⁴⁷ Ep. VI P 33, 20.

²⁴⁸ J I 266, 20-21.

²⁴⁹ J II 138, 23-25.

²⁵⁰ J II 18-23; Ep. III P 22, 4-6.

²⁵¹ Ep. XIII P 42, 8-15.

b. *Drugs and Poisons*

The preparation of medicines from the time of Pliny on was left frequently to professional makers of them. Physicians in early times usually prepared their own, but gradually, either to save time or through ignorance, they too often depended upon the "pharmacopolae" for drugs or remedies. Antiquity did not know the equivalent of the modern pharmacist who fills prescriptions upon the order of the physician and under the control of the state. Some attempt was made by Rome to restrict the public sale of dangerous remedies, but still the dispensers of drugs and remedies plied their trade with questionable efficacy and much dependence upon superstition and magic.²⁵²

St. Gregory refers several times to the use of drugs and poisons. He deprecates the employing of drugs as remedies for the incurably sick, for, he says, "the sick who are already on the verge of death easily perish by reason of the more active medicines."²⁵³ To give such drugs to them is useless in his opinion. He incidentally bears witness here to the fact that too violent remedies were sometimes applied in his day.

There is an interesting implication also in the statement that the man who knows how to cure the sick by medicine could by a perversion of his art destroy health and even bring on death by administering poison.²⁵⁴ The existence of a professional dispenser of poison in the fourth century may be implied in two references: in the first St. Gregory alludes to the vender who makes the poison easy to take by adding honey; whereupon it works its deadly effect upon the victim.²⁵⁵ Again, he asserts that those who sell these poisons give a foretaste of how deadly a full dosage may be by giving a small sample, possibly to the customer, as a trial!²⁵⁶ There

²⁵² Cf. "Médicus" DS III 1679-1681.

²⁵³ J I 20,8 - 21,2.

²⁵⁴ J I 267, 4-7.

²⁵⁵ J I 232, 4-9. The profession and to some extent the tradition of "poison-mongers" extended from Greek into mediaeval and even modern times. Cf. Singer (2) II 57. It must be borne in mind here, however, that the allusion to mixing ill-tasting substances with honey is a commonplace in ancient Greek literature. Cf. e.g., Plut. *Quaest. Conv.* 709 E; Plato *Leges* II 659 E.

²⁵⁶ J I 373, 13-18.

are several additional references to the dispensing and use of poison, and the attempts to disguise its bitterness to make it palatable. These are rather colorless and commonplace, and in their case as well as in that of the preceding instances, it is difficult to determine whether they proceed from actual observation or from reading and hearsay.²⁵⁷

An allusion is made by way of illustration to the use of mandrake as a drug producing lethargy and powerlessness.²⁵⁸ Though the subject of much legendary lore, modern science confirms the anaesthetic properties of this plant.²⁵⁹

c. *Anatomy*

St. Gregory in an interesting allusion in the *Contra Eunomium* challenges Eunomius to give an account of the anatomy of the ant, referring in detail to the parts of an animal's anatomy, and thereby witnessing to two points which are of interest to this study: first, the fourth century had scant knowledge of the actual anatomy of the ant; and, second, it had knowledge in considerable detail of the anatomy of larger animals.²⁶⁰ The following items gleaned from this passage²⁶¹ are worthy of note. The life of animals, he says, is sustained by air and breathing, and regulated by vital organs. Marrow is within their bones. Joints are kept taut by sinews and ligaments. The position of the sinews is controlled by muscles and glands. The marrow extends along the vertebrae of the back-bone, and this marrow, covered with sinewy membrane, gives the power

²⁵⁷ J I 21, 23-24; J II 90, 3-6; 238, 10-13; 342, 21-23. On the subject of the dispensing of drugs and poisons cf. also Neuburger II, 11-17, and Friedländer I 176-182.

²⁵⁸ J II 73, 20-24. On its use as an anaesthetic by the ancient Greeks cf. Ligeros 128 and 139.

²⁵⁹ Cf. Thompson, *The Mystic Mandrake* 237-245.

²⁶⁰ For a good summary of the anatomical and physiological knowledge recorded up to the fourth century cf. Pagel 1-140.

²⁶¹ J II 227,4 - 228,1. Formerly attributed to St. Basil. Cf. Deferrari I *Letter XVI* 114-117. On its authenticity as a work rather of St. Gregory of Nyssa, see Diekamp, *Theol. Quartalschr.* 77 (1895) 277-285.

of propulsion to the movable limbs.²⁶² The gall bladder is a vessel near the liver. There are also within the creature kidneys, heart, arteries, veins, membranes, and diaphragm. There is a definitely limited period of pregnancy.

An additional reference is made to the heart and brain, and though casual it is included here for the sake of completeness.²⁶³

Another allusion mentions the following as parts of the arm: bones, nerves, flesh, and sinews.²⁶⁴

d. Physiology

From St. Gregory's treatise "On the Making of Man"²⁶⁵ and from others of his writings it becomes apparent that this fourth century churchman had a deep interest in physiology and had culled much current physiological lore both by observation and by study.²⁶⁶ While the *Letters* contain no allusions of this kind, the references to physiological matters in the *Contra Eunomium* bear this out.

In one instance he gives a detailed description of the functioning of the organs of speech. These organs are, he says, windpipe, tongue, teeth, mouth, all co-operating, together with inhaled and exhaled air, to produce utterance. The windpipe fits into the throat after the manner of a flute and gives out a sound from below. The upper part of the mouth, by means of the empty space overlying it and extending to the nostrils like a sort of musical bridge, gives volume to the sound by an echo from above. The cheeks also help out, expanding and contracting "in accordance with the soft formation of their joints" and conducting the sound through a narrow passage made by the "versatile turnings of the tongue." The latter with the aid of the teeth or the roof of the

²⁶² Seemingly referring to the spinal column. Hippocrates apparently had studied very closely the spinal column and thoroughly understood its importance and significance. Cf. Ligeros 420-421. On Galen's study and achievements in this regard, cf. Neuburger I 379-380.

²⁶³ J II 240, 10-12.

²⁶⁴ J II 187, 6-9.

²⁶⁵ PG XLIV, 123 ff.

²⁶⁶ Cf. Neuburger II, 75-80; also Keenan (2) 468.

mouth thus roughens or makes smooth the breath as it passes over it. The lips also assist by moving and helping to complete the shape of the words.²⁶⁷ Further, some words are shaped by the lips, some by the tongue, and some by both.²⁶⁸

"Who," he says elsewhere, "even of the altogether foolish, does not know that hearing and speech have a natural relation with one another, and as it is not possible for hearing to operate if no sound is being uttered, so no word can be effectual if not directed to hearing?"²⁶⁹

Again, he outlines in detail what was evidently the currently accepted explanation of the transformation which food undergoes in the process of nourishing the body. He gives as an example milk which an infant drinks. From the mouth it passes as if through a channel to the "secretory ducts." Then "the transforming power of nature brings the milk to each one of the limbs in turn, by digestion mincing up the nourishment into countless different qualities and making (the milk) of the same nature as the parts it contacts, corresponding to each one." He then proceeds to enumerate the various parts of the body which, though so different from one another in their properties, nevertheless have developed from the same food: arteries, veins, brain, membranes, marrow, bones, nerves, ligaments, tendons, flesh, skin, cartilages, fat, hair, nails, perspiration, vapors, phlegm, bile . . . the limbs, the senses, the organs, and "as many other things as fill up the bulk of the body."²⁷⁰

He declares in another allusion that bones and cartilages, nails and hair, though receiving nourishment along with other parts of the body, have no feeling.²⁷¹

This allusiveness of St. Gregory to matters within the province of the science of medicine, an allusiveness again typical of the educated man of letters of his day, presupposes at least a cursory background of knowledge in that field. Without entering into the question of the sources from which such knowledge must ulti-

²⁶⁷ J I 271, 7-23.

²⁶⁸ J I 27-29.

²⁶⁹ J I 272, 29-33.

²⁷⁰ J I 134, 9-25.

²⁷¹ J I 248, 16-17.

mately have derived, it may be said that most of the medical allusions assembled in the preceding pages are of the general and non-professional sort that would not indicate an extensive background of serious study in the medical field. His ideas on the subject seem to have been gained chiefly by observation and from conversations with physicians or others. In fact he specifically mentions having obtained the material for certain allusions in this way.²⁷² His references to anatomy and physiology, however, seem to be based upon something more solid, and may have resulted from consultation of available works on such matters. No doubt some such procedure had been forced upon him by the task of interpreting Genesis and by the needs of his polemics.

²⁷² Ep. XIII P 42, 6-13; J I 39, 6-17. Cf. Cherniss 60.

CHAPTER IV

CHRISTIAN SOCIETY

The predominating role of the Bishop of Nyssa in the *Contra Eunomium* and the *Letters* is that of spiritual father and teacher; hence references pertaining to the Christian religion abound. The majority, however, have to do with doctrine and these do not concern us here. Discussions of theological questions and the formal teaching of the Church concerning faith and morals have of set purpose been omitted from this monograph,¹ since these matters have been adequately treated in the considerable literature already existing. There remain nevertheless many allusions which give information about details of the Christian social milieu in the fourth century, adding to, or clarifying, or corroborating, as the case may be, the evidence presented by other sources.

Taken together they place in sharp relief several facts in particular: the open conflict between heretics and Christians of all classes in fourth century Asia Minor; the part played in the conflict by the bishops; and the enduring vitality of the customs and traditions of the Church. The references are classified under general headings which follow these leading topics.

A. ACTIVITIES OF HERETICS, PAGANS AND JEWS

1. *Relations of Christians with Heretics*

St. Gregory notes that in his day "the city of God, the Church, is being besieged and the great wall of the faith is being shaken, battered by the engines of heresy which are round about it."² The heresy especially troublesome to the Church in fourth century Cappadocia was Arianism in its various ramifications. This it is that St. Gregory is earnestly engaged in refuting in the *Contra*

¹ Cf. Preface.

² J I 218, 20-23.

Eunomium. The theological side of the question does not concern us here but rather the social aspect of St. Gregory's relations with the Arians and other heretics, many details of which can be reconstructed from the *Letters* and from incidental allusions in the *Contra Eunomium*. The picture thus formed is of necessity colored by the fact that its author was so deeply concerned in the struggle. It is instructive, nevertheless, both because of the incidents reported—which we have no reason for disbelieving—and for the attitude of St. Gregory revealed in the process. It also attests the turbulence of the times in that a religious controversy was not a matter of dialectics and debate merely, but was attended by much personal abuse, scheming trickery, and deeds of violence. It witnesses also to the fact that in the fourth century such a controversy was a matter of great moment to the civil government which took sides according to the religion professed by the reigning Emperor.

In dealing with the materials in this section problems of chronology turn up and also the question of St. Gregory's whereabouts at certain periods. The problem of chronology is not vital to this study though it cannot be totally ignored. Therefore in summing up the pertinent facts in the following pages chronological evidence has been briefly noted where it occurs, but without trying to form conclusions about the period to which particular references belong.

St. Gregory refers specifically to the fact that in his day the Faith has already been clearly defined³ and that the criterion of orthodoxy is conformity with the doctrine of "those who set forth at Nicaea the correct and sound faith."⁴ He declares also that "the Faith is openly preached throughout the whole world."⁵ Nevertheless the confusion of men's minds with regard to doctrinal matters, which had grown to be a serious problem from the first to the third century of our era, and which had necessitated the promulgation of a definite creed at Nicaea, continued to be a problem afterward.⁶ Those who openly and stubbornly adhered to teachings at variance with the articles of the Nicene Creed were regarded as

³ J I 43, 14-21.

⁴ Ep. V P 29, 11-13.

⁵ Ep. III P 20, 18-24.

⁶ Cf. Crontz *passim*; "Hérétiques" DACL VI 2252; Fliche et Martin III 100 ff. and other Church Histories cited in the bibliography.

heretics by the orthodox—who accepted the Creed without reservation—and sometimes the dissentients were formally judged and their doctrines condemned by Church Councils. It was possible then as it is now, of course, for members of the "orthodox" to fall unwittingly into heresy in explaining the matter of the Creed or other religious doctrine, but St. Gregory's references to heretics are all concerned with members of the various more or less organized groups in his day who persisted in recalcitrance to some of the teachings of the main body of the Church which unreservedly subscribed to the Nicene Creed.

Between the orthodox group and the heretical factions there was practically open warfare and in his capacity of Bishop of Nyssa, St. Gregory became a protagonist of consequence in the fray. Several occurrences mentioned by him are instructive of the activities incident to the struggle. He tells how, during his absence from Nyssa assisting at the death of his sister St. Macrina in Pontus,⁷ "the Galatians who are neighbors of my church, according to their usual custom having secretly sown the disease of heresies everywhere in my church, caused me no small struggle, so that entirely through God with difficulty was I strong enough to survive the trial."⁸

This was no uncommon happening. Dissension in religious matters, always smouldering, frequently blazed out fiercely when a see was temporarily without a leader because of the death or absence of its bishop. St. Gregory recounts that after the death of the Bishop of Ibora, a deputation came from that city to beg him to go there and straighten out difficulties resulting from the machinations of heretics. And while there he was sought for a like mission by people from Sebastea in Lesser Armenia.⁹ Jerusalem also had similar difficulties which St. Gregory was asked to mediate,¹⁰ and likewise Arabia.¹¹ Strife over religious doctrine was thus very acute;¹² in fact discussions on religious controversies

⁷ Ep. XIX P 63, 4-5; 14-16.

⁸ *Ibid.* 17-21.

⁹ *Ibid.* 63,24 - 64,9. Cf. Pasquali's note ad loc.

¹⁰ Ep. II P 15, 6-9.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 1-5; on Arabia cf. Chap. II note 63 *supra*.

¹² Ep. III P 20,24 - 21,2. Especially so in the fourth century. Cf. Fliche et Martin III 203.

were even carried into the schools of surgery, St. Gregory declares.¹³

Like so many other orthodox bishops of his day St. Gregory was exiled from his see by reason of the intrigues of the Arians who were supported in their machinations by the Arian Emperor, Valens.¹⁴ This fact testifies further to the activities accessory to the religious strife of the fourth century. Demosthenes, the Vicarius of Pontus,¹⁵ convoked a council of Arian bishops at Nyssa in 376¹⁶ expressly to depose and replace St. Gregory as Bishop of Nyssa.¹⁷ The exile lasted until the death of Valens in 378 when the bishops of the Nicene faith were restored to their sees.

Indirectly as a result of the activities of heretics St. Gregory was obliged to spend another period of enforced absence from his see. He was summoned to Ibora by the orthodox group there to assist them against the rival claims of the heretical party in the election of a bishop to replace the recently deceased primate of that city. While there, he tells us, "straightway embassies on a like mission overtook me, coming from the main body of the people of Sebastea requiring of me to outstrip the attack of the heretics."¹⁸

¹³ J I 35, 4-7; cf. p. 13 *supra*.

¹⁴ On the relations between Church and State in the fourth century cf. chap. II *supra*. The fact of his exile is incontestable, but St. Gregory never mentions it specifically in the *Contra Eunomium* or the *Letters*. Several of the latter nevertheless undoubtedly refer to it by implication as shown here in the pages immediately following. The details must be supplied mainly from the letters of St. Basil and St. Gregory Nazianzen. Cf. Basil *Epp.* 237, 225; Greg. Naz. *Epp.* LXXII, LXXIII, LXXIV. The place of exile is uncertain. Cf. "Grégoire de Nysse" DTC VI 1847-1852.

¹⁵ Cf. Chap. II note 316.

¹⁶ On the date cf. Loofs 10 ff.

¹⁷ Bas. *Ep.* 237. Demosthenes had previously endeavored to have St. Gregory arrested and imprisoned on the charge of mismanagement of church funds. St. Basil came to his brother's defence, explaining that illness made it impossible for the latter to appear at the appointed time to answer the charges. He assured Demosthenes that the treasurers of the Church fund were able to prove from their records that the accusations against the Bishop of Nyssa were false. The charge arose, he declared, because of the alleged irregularity of St. Gregory's consecration as bishop. Cf. "Grégoire de Nysse" DTC VI 1847.

¹⁸ *Ep.* XIX P 64, 4-9.

He complied with the request, and to his distress was himself elected bishop, though already occupying the see of Nyssa.¹⁹ The heretical party of Sebastea who wished to install a candidate of their own violently opposed him. Consequently his few months' stay in that city²⁰ was one of utter misery until the difficulty was resolved and he could finally return to Nyssa. In Letter XIX he lugubriously refers to the hardships he had to endure in Sebastea at the hands of the hostile heretical faction as "worthy of silence and unspeakable groans and continual dejection and grief. . . ." He states that the heretics had the support of the civil government, and to make matters worse he found that his opponents were "ignorant, and more than barbarous in language, both uncouth in speech and brutal in manner of living . . . and for them lying is readier than truth," he declares.²¹ Allowing for the fact that such testimony is naturally colored by St. Gregory's sensitive nature, still his experiences in Sebastea have something to tell us of the great activity of heretics in the East in the fourth century in their efforts to gain control of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, the means they sometimes employed, and the attitude of heretic and orthodox one to the other.

The brief note of St. Gregory, Letter XXII²²—addressed to bishops—probably was also written at Sebastea,²³ and adds its mite of testimony to the above. Therein St. Gregory represents himself as spending a trying sojourn among "unrepentant Ninevites," as he calls them. He compares himself to Jonah imprisoned in the whale and prays that he may soon be released.

Letter XVIII, written to the Bishop of Melitene, is also chiefly devoted to a rehearsal of the hardships being endured by St. Gregory during a compulsory absence from his see, but it cannot be conclusively determined where he was.²⁴ Whether he was in

¹⁹ Cf. p. 156 *infra*.

²⁰ For the chronology of this period cf. Diekamp (1) 393.

²¹ *Ep.* XIX P 64, 15 - 65, 17.

²² P 71, 10-17.

²³ So Diekamp, 400-401, demonstrates from internal evidence.

²⁴ Pasquali, SIFC 75-87, points out internal evidence which may indicate Sebastea. Much of the evidence he cites is applicable either to the exile or to the sojourn at Sebastea, but one point in particular does argue rather con-

Sebastea,—the more likely view—or in exile, in either case what he says of his adversaries is predicated of contemporaneous fourth century heretics and therefore brings grist to our mill. He accuses them of sophistry, empty show, and vain deceit, and sarcastically remarks: "Now that I am at the end of my life I begin again to live; I am forced to learn the popular cunning of manners which is now in vogue, becoming a tardy pupil in maliciousness and in similar knavery so as to blush continually at my inaptitude for the business. But my opponents, the teachers of this learning, are able both to defend what they know and to invent what they do not know." He continues with an elaborate metaphor describing the "warfare" conducted against him by his opponents. Besides he is forced to live, he says, in "a little stifling house abounding in cold and gloom" deprived of all he holds dear. Worst of all he finds himself the object of continual hostile criticism. Voice, appearance, clothing, gestures, the slightest details of behavior are being carped at to his great distress, he asserts.²⁵

Several other letters²⁶ also attest the type of treatment sometimes meted out by one party to another in the religious struggle in central Asia Minor in the fourth century. Again it is impossible to say to which period of St. Gregory's life these references apply. He dwells at length upon mental sufferings which apparently caused him great distress. "Very much," he says, "have I suffered by reason of the coldness and bitterness resulting from the manners of the natives."²⁷ And he goes on to compare their gradually increasing malice and spite to the accumulation of ice on the roofs of houses in the vicinity. He begs his correspondent to bring spring-time once more into his life by paying him a cheering visit.²⁸ An-

vincingly for Sebastea. St. Gregory speaks of being separated when he is writing from his symbolic spouse who has shown steadfast loyalty to him in times of trial and danger (P 57, 22-24). As Pasquali well shows the "spouse" can be only the Church of Nyssa. St. Gregory was absent from her both during his exile and also during his quasi-imprisonment at Sebastea, but only with reference to the latter could mention be made of a previous time of trial, viz. the exile, in which the "spouse" had remained faithful.

²⁵ Ep. XVIII P 58,6 - 59,9.

²⁶ Notably X XI XII XVI.

²⁷ Ep. XII P 41, 9-10.

²⁸ P 41,10 - 42,3.

other letter also refers to the uncongenial atmosphere in which he is living and compares to the pleasant arrival of spring the solace afforded him by a recent missive of his correspondent.²⁹ Again, in a curious epistle full of reminiscences of Homer³⁰ he also stresses his mental sufferings. Heartened by letters, "I will endure," he declares, " 'harsh Ithaca,' harsh not by reason of its stones so much as because of the manners of its inhabitants, Ithaca in which there are many wooers and devourers of the substance of her who is wooed, by this very fact also insulting the wife, namely by threatening her chastity with marriage, acting, I think, in a manner deserved by a Melantho or some such woman, but nowhere is there one who chastens them with his bow."³¹

A further indication of the unsettled character of the times in religious matters is found in the fact that a prominent bishop like St. Gregory of Nyssa could more than once have his orthodoxy seriously called in question. He states in a letter that he has been informed by friends that slander is being spread to the effect that he differs in his profession of faith from that set forth at Nicaea.³²

²⁹ Ep. X P 37-38. Because of the similarity of the sentiment it seems likely that both Epp. X and XII refer to the same period. Since St. Gregory's stay at Sebastea was at the end of winter just before spring, it may be that the letters refer to that difficult time, but the evidence is not conclusive and may apply as well to his exile or to the early years of his bishopric. Cf. Pasquali SIFC 94-96.

³⁰ Cf. p. 120 *supra*.

³¹ Ep. XI P 40, 1-8. This reference recalls that of Ep. XVIII to the "legitimate spouse" (P 57, 22-24) which in that context seems to be the Church of Nyssa, employing an allegory not infrequent in fourth century ecclesiastical writers. A possible interpretation here is that the "wife," faithful Penelope, is the Church of Sebastea. Cf. SIFC 92-96. St. Gregory seems not to have been at Nyssa (P. 39, 16-17), and the other details do not fit in as well with other periods of his life. The "wooers" are heretical aspirants to the bishopric then held unwillingly by St. Gregory who feels he is, unlike Ulysses, most incapable of handling the situation. "Penelope" is still awaiting the return of "Ulysses" who would, in this case, be the legally elected and installed Bishop of Sebastea, a position which St. Gregory does not hold since though elected he resisted being installed. However, as Pasquali points out (SIFC 95, note 5) it is possible to interpret P 39, 16-17 in such a way that St. Gregory could be at Nyssa, and then the letter might refer to the early years of his bishopric.

³² Ep. V P 89, 5-14.

He devotes the remainder of the letter to an exposition of his belief in order that he may prove beyond any shadow of doubt his adherence to the orthodox faith.³³ Again, when he was commissioned to go to Jerusalem to straighten out the affairs of the Church in that city, the heretical clergy of Jerusalem, resenting his efforts, accused him of himself teaching the heresy which he came there to fight,³⁴ and he found his efforts frustrated.

Heretics in his day, according to St. Gregory, were filled with hatred for anyone who opposed their erroneous views.³⁵ They were especially irritated by those priests who were working zealously to prevent people from being influenced by heretical beliefs.³⁶ Eunomius did not give vent merely to impulsive anger over St. Basil's attempts to confute him and win him back to the fold, but deliberately composed contemptuous abusive accusations with no basis of fact against St. Basil and against priests in general.³⁷ St. Gregory also asserts that these coarse writings, declaimed with exaggerated gestures,³⁸ appealed to Eunomius' audience eager as it was for novelty.³⁹ Moreover he implies in one instance that some members of his own audience rather looked for invective in the *Contra Eunomium*, revealing thereby something more of the temper of the times.⁴⁰

In analyzing Eunomius' method still further he mentions the psychology employed by the heretic in attracting new adherents to his doctrine, namely, "casting aside the steepness and toilsomeness of virtue."⁴¹ Besides thus using clever methods for their pur-

³³ Thus, Letter V is an "expositio fidei" intended to be read before a synod, rather than a simple letter, though cast in epistolary form. It is not clear just what synod is concerned, though it must have met prior to the Council of Constantinople in 381 as Pasquali demonstrates (P 90 note 4). For a discussion of the date of the letter and of the identity of the synod for which it was intended cf. Pasquali SIFC 87-92.

³⁴ Probably Apollinarism. Cf. Pasquali 119; and Ep. III, esp. P 24,13 - 25,17.

³⁵ Ep. III P 24, 13-18.

³⁶ J I 31, 1-3.

³⁷ J I 22, 2-4; 30,9 - 31,1.

³⁸ Cf. pp. 103. ff. *supra*.

³⁹ J I 35, 15-17.

⁴⁰ J I 49,24 - 50,3.

⁴¹ J I 37, 17-23.

pose the heretics were inspired by unworthy motives, St. Gregory tells us. In disseminating their erroneous doctrines they were not primarily actuated by zeal to spread what they thought was the truth, but were rather eaten up by a desire for fame, and beyond that regarded the teaching of heresy as a means of gaining a livelihood like any trade.⁴²

St. Gregory, of course, entertained the opinion that all culpable animosity in the struggle was on the part of the heretical factions. He contrasts with the bitter hostility of Eunomius the commendable attitude of his brother St. Basil who, he says, worked hard to refute the heresy of Eunomius with the view of using every means to rescue him and restore him to the Church.⁴³ He aimed at the same time to destroy impiety and heal the soul.⁴⁴ Despite St. Gregory's appreciation of the desirability of such dispositions the tone of the *Contra Eunomium* does not reveal an attitude free from bitterness on the part of its author, nor do his petulant complaints against the opposing faction in Sebastea and during his exile. This is in keeping, however, with the spirit of the age and Old Testament ideas regarding God's enemies. Similarly in one of his letters he says, "I declare that it is lawful to hate God's enemies and that such hatred is pleasing to the Lord, and by enemies I mean those who utterly deny the glory of the Lord, whether Jews or those who openly practice idolatry or those who depict creation by the teachings of Arius and thus adopt the Jewish error."⁴⁵ The letter was written to three pious ladies living in Jerusalem congratulating them on their virtuous lives and deprecating the vice rampant in the city. That a Christian bishop felt free to incorporate such a statement casually in a letter of the kind implies that the idea it conveys was acceptable among his contemporaries in the number of the orthodox.

Earnest as St. Gregory shows himself in the face of heresy, it is no surprise to discover from his references in the *Contra Eunomium* that in the interest of his polemics this fourth century bishop has become acquainted not only with the tenets of Arianism and

⁴² J I 35, 10-13; 39, 17-21.

⁴³ J I 21, 23-26.

⁴⁴ J I 48, 22-25.

⁴⁵ Ep. III P 20, 2-8.

Anomoeanism,⁴⁶ which were his primary concern, but with the teachings and history of certain other heresies as well: for example, Manicheism,⁴⁷ Sabellianism and Montanism,⁴⁸ Gnosticism.⁴⁹ He disparagingly links up Eunomius in doctrinal matters with Theognostus,⁵⁰ Marcion,⁵¹ Valentinus, Cerinthus, Basilides, Montanus,⁵² Nicolaus and Colluthius.⁵³

2. References to Pagans and Jews

Besides heretics St. Gregory classes together as enemies of God, Jews and idolators also.⁵⁴ He declares pessimistically, "We do not become entangled with those who occupy themselves with idols and the bloody defilement of the altar, not because we agree to the destruction of those frenzied with idols, but because their disease is too severe to be cured by us."⁵⁵

Casual references to pagan divinities, made by way of illustration reflect ideas current in St. Gregory's day regarding the Babylonian worship of their sky-god, Baal, and the Egyptian worship of Anubis, Isis, and Osiris.⁵⁶

In a letter St. Gregory alludes to a holiday, partly religious, celebrated on the first day of January in contemporary pagan society with festivities, superstitious practices, and exchanging of gifts.⁵⁷

In addition to the above-mentioned allusion to the Jews as enemies of God⁵⁸ St. Gregory refers to them in several other in-

⁴⁶ J I 85.

⁴⁷ J I 164-168.

⁴⁸ J II 234-235.

⁴⁹ J I 307, 29.

⁵⁰ J II 86, 23-24.

⁵¹ J II 253, 7-8 and 269, 16-19.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ J II 270, 1-4.

⁵⁴ Ep. III P 20, 4-8.

⁵⁵ J II 164, 13-16.

⁵⁶ The Greeks and Babylonians: J II 102,25 - 103,25; cf. "Baal" PW II 2647-2652. The Egyptians: 289,18 - 290,3; 103, 6-8. Cf. "Anubis" PW I 2645-2649; "Isis" PW IX 2084-2132.

⁵⁷ Ep. XIV P 44, 11-13. Cf. p. 168 *infra*.

⁵⁸ Cf. note 54 *supra*.

stances. He endeavors to show that Eunomianism is closely related to Judaism by listing citations indicating Eunomius' dependence upon the works of Philo Judaeus.⁵⁹ This attempt to connect Eunomius with Judaism seems to be a matter of doctrinal polemics and not an appeal to race prejudice.

The persistence among Jews in the fourth century of various Jewish customs, such as, keeping the seventh day holy as the Sabbath, circumcision on the eighth day after birth, the seven days of the azymes, is attested by another allusion.⁶⁰

B. BISHOPS AND CLERGY

The prominent part played by fourth century bishops in both civil and ecclesiastical life is very evident in the literature of the period. St. Gregory's *Letters* especially are rich in informative references to bishops, and these are discussed under the following headings: the method of choosing a bishop, the qualities considered desirable in a bishop, the extent of wealth and power of bishops, activities of bishops, relations of bishops with one another, famous episcopal traditions, and finally, the clergy.

1. The Method of Choosing a Bishop

The common and approved method of filling the vacant see of a bishop in the fourth century was by election by a group of bishops from neighboring sees with the acclamation and approbation of the people. In some cases where the people would certainly have made a bad choice the bishops elected and consecrated a candidate without the people. Rules for elections were carefully defined by the Council of Nicaea and subsequent provincial and general councils of the Church.⁶¹

Because of the intestine strife in the Church between heretics and the orthodox, a strife which the council of Nicaea had not suc-

⁵⁹ J II 206,18 - 207,3. Cf. p. 117 *supra*.

⁶⁰ J II 216,23 - 217,7. A casual reference to the Jews also occurs in 310,27; and an exposé of their religious errors, J I 97-99, *passim*.

⁶¹ Cf. Hefele - Leclercq I, 545-548. See also "Élections Épiscopales" DACL IV 2618-2621.

ceeded in ending, there was frequently considerable confusion subsequent to the decease of a bishop over the question of his successor. Two of St. Gregory's letters testify vividly to this point. In one he writes to the orthodox group in Nicomedia, assuring them of his willingness to visit them and assist in the election of a bishop so that the discordant state in which they were then living might be terminated.⁶² The second letter describes how he himself became involved in a strange situation as a result of similarly acting as mediator in another city.

The Bishop of Iбора, he tells us, had recently died, and a delegation was dispatched by the orthodox group of the populace to beg him to come as a mediator to their city which was being "rent asunder" by dissension. When he had arrived there and, as he says, "in accordance with the customary procedure" was administering the affairs of that church, a similar delegation came to him from Sebastea, begging him to go to their city also and give his assistance against the machinations of the heretics. He acceded to their request and presided at Sebastea over an assembly of bishops whose purpose in coming together was to elect a bishop for the vacant see. To the great distress of St. Gregory he himself was elected as the new bishop of Sebastea, notwithstanding that he was already Bishop of Nyssa. Not only was the choice unhappy from his own point of view, but it was displeasing as well to the heretical faction who enlisted the aid of the civil government against the thoroughly disconsolate newly elected occupant of the cathedra in the see of Sebastea.⁶³ He volubly laments his miserable plight in this, as well as in several other letters.⁶⁴ Dickamp has calculated that this unpleasant sojourn in Sebastea lasted for about two months, after which St. Gregory was released and allowed to return to his own see.⁶⁵

The transfer of a bishop from one see to another was frowned upon by the Church from its infancy. The practice had been forbidden in its incipient stage by the primitive Church. Many such transfers nevertheless occurred during the first three centuries, and

⁶² Ep. XVII P 50, 3-8.

⁶³ Ep. XVIII P 63,24 - 64,24.

⁶⁴ Cf. pp. 149 ff. *supra*.

⁶⁵ Dickamp (1) 393.

there were present at the Council of Nicaea several bishops who had left their first bishopric to take another.⁶⁶ The Council of Nicaea forbade any future transfers of this kind, and declared them invalid.⁶⁷ However, the fact that such transfers continued to take place is clear from the repetition of the prohibition by succeeding Councils of the Church.⁶⁸ St. Gregory's experience corroborates this testimony and witnesses also to the fact that the transfer of a bishop was tolerated by the Church when a serious exigency, such as the state of affairs in Sebastea, seemed to demand it.⁶⁹ There is further testimony to this in the fact that despite the long established tradition against such transfers and the specific enactments of Church councils St. Gregory does not include the invalidity of his own transfer among his complaints. In the East especially, during the fourth century the interests of the Church caused many exceptions to the law to be made.⁷⁰

Attention has previously been called to the fact that the method of selecting a bishop by election as prescribed by the councils of the Church was sometimes disregarded by civil authority when the Emperor or his representative removed or appointed a bishop.⁷¹ This expedient ordinarily was resorted to by an Arian or Semi-Arian emperor in order to install a creature of his own in lieu of an ousted orthodox bishop. St. Gregory refers to the removal in this manner of St. Athanasius from the church of Alexandria and the installation of a heretic in his place.⁷²

2. The Qualities Considered Desirable in a Bishop

The Council of Laodicea in its twelfth canon prescribes that before electing a candidate as bishop, the other bishops ought to

⁶⁶ Cf. Hefele - Leclercq I, 597-601.

⁶⁷ Canon 15.

⁶⁸ Cf., e.g., Canon 21 of the Council of Antioch held in 341; Hefele - Leclercq I, 721. This canon specifically legislates against the forcing of a bishop by other bishops to transfer from one see to another. See also Canon I of the Council of Sardica; *ibid.* 761.

⁶⁹ Cf. Dickamp (1) 399-400.

⁷⁰ Hefele - Leclercq I, 601.

⁷¹ Cf. p. 84 *supra*.

⁷² J I 36, 2-6. Cf. Thomassin IV 217 ff. "De la Part que les Empereurs eurent aux élections des Evêques pendant les cinq Premiers Siècles;" Fliche et Martin III 100 ff.

be very sure of his orthodoxy and good life.⁷³ A prescription of this sort implies the negative thesis that in choosing a bishop not infrequently other and less commendable considerations influenced the choice. St. Gregory has a letter which carries with it a similar implication and gives us more detail about the qualities considered desirable in a bishop by the properly instructed and well-disposed Christians of his day.

He says it is a shameful thing if while a man is not permitted to become the helmsman of a ship without the proper qualifications, one should be elected as bishop who "does not know how to impel the souls of those who sail with him into the harbor of God."⁷⁴ The kind of man is needed who will "see with his whole vision only the things of God, lifting his eye to no one of the things that are eagerly pursued in life."⁷⁵ Family, wealth, worldly reputation ought not be considered of primary importance, he says. "If, on the one hand, some of these qualities should accompany your leading men incidentally as a shadow which accompanies a man by chance, we do not cast them aside; but, on the other hand, if none of them are present we shall be no less content with qualities which are of more account even if they be found without the former."⁷⁶ He continues by recalling the case of the apostles and prophets who were of lowly station and occupation, but were not on that account disqualified in the eyes of God.⁷⁷ Thus it is wholly in keeping with the tradition of the Church, he declares, that "those who are great according to God have been preferred in honor to those who are great in the eyes of the world."⁷⁸

3. The Extent of the Wealth and Power of Bishops

Though fully conscious of the dignity of the episcopate⁷⁹ and ready to defend and exercise its prerogatives whenever the exigency

⁷³ Cf. Hefele - Leclercq I₂ 1005.

⁷⁴ Ep. XVII P 53, 21-25.

⁷⁵ P 50,30 - 51,4.

⁷⁶ P 51, 17-26.

⁷⁷ For a similar sentiment cf. Chrysostom, *De Sacerdotio* PG XLVIII 639-640.

⁷⁸ Ep. XVII P 53, 5-7.

⁷⁹ Cf. Ep. XVII P 49-56.

arose, St. Gregory lived a simple, even an ascetic life, while Bishop of Nyssa.⁸⁰ After the manner of St. Basil and other bishops of his day he displayed consistently an attitude of detachment toward wealth.⁸¹ At those periods when he had unmolested possession of his see he was in control of whatever funds and property were possessed by the Church there according to the regular usage at that time.⁸² Two of his letters imply the fact of this control and the modest extent of the wealth under his charge. The first of these epistles indicates that with no apparent difficulty he is able to comply with a request for a considerable supply of lumber.⁸³ The second letter makes it evident that the resources at his disposal were limited. It was necessary for him to budget expenses very carefully in planning the construction of a martyr's shrine. This necessity was so urgent that he speaks of it as actual poverty. With engaging frankness he declares, "that Mammon, time and again denounced by us, has finally betaken himself as far as possible away from us because, I think, he hated the nonsense already spoken against him, and by a sort of impassable chasm, my poverty I mean, he separated himself from me so that neither can he come to me nor can I cross over to him."⁸⁴ He continues by saying he hopes his "poverty" will not interfere with the work of building the shrine, but apart from this consideration he is not distressed by it. The simplicity of his tastes and manner of living, another indication of his poverty of spirit, is reflected by the items which he enumerates as the things he misses especially during an enforced absence from his see, for example his hearth, table, straw mattress, etc.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ For details cf. p. 177 *infra*.

⁸¹ Cf. Ep. XXV P 80, 10-11 and Ep. XIV P 44, 16-20. Ep. XVII P 54,25 - 56,3.

⁸² Cf. "Épiscopat" DACL V 229. In fact the charge upon which he was deposed by Demosthenes was that of misappropriation of these funds, a charge successfully refuted by St. Basil. Cf. Bas. Ep. 237.

⁸³ Ep. XXVII P 81-82. Whether the transaction involved a gift or a loan or a sale cannot be determined with certainty, but at any rate it witnesses to the fact that the Bishop of Nyssa was in control of the property concerned. Cf. p. 34 *supra*.

⁸⁴ Ep. XXV P 80, 2-7.

⁸⁵ Ep. XVIII P 57,20 - 58,5: Pasquali thinks he was at Sebastea at this time. Cf. SIFC 75-87.

However, that St. Gregory's spirit of detachment toward wealth was not a quality entirely typical of the episcopacy in his day is testified to by church legislation of the time.⁸⁶ Two of St. Gregory's letters imply this also. Stagirius commences the highly rhetorical letter of request in which he asks St. Gregory for the lumber to which we referred above, by characterizing all bishops as "grasping." He says he hopes that whereas St. Gregory has surpassed the others in eloquence, he will not also surpass them in promptness to refuse his request.⁸⁷ In his reply St. Gregory cleverly turns the sophist's witticism back upon himself by asking who is more "ungrasping," the bishops beleaguered on all sides by letters of request or the rhetoricians who dispense their learning in exchange for high fees.⁸⁸ The friendly and playful tone of both letters precludes too literally interpreting these statements as evidence, but beneath the banter we may assume at least the fact that in Stagirius' corner of the fourth century world bishops were thought of as somewhat penurious.

Again, in the letter regarding Bishop Helladius' enmity to him St. Gregory makes a covert allusion to Helladius' steadily increasing wealth, with the implication that the means by which it has increased cannot bear close scrutiny.⁸⁹

The increasing power of fourth century bishops in civil matters has already been discussed.⁹⁰ Their contemporary power in ecclesiastical matters is illustrated by the following references. Stagirius the sophist is referring to the episcopal power and probably power of excommunication when he declares in a letter to St. Gregory: "... even if you wish to cut a person off from paradise, you have the power to do so."⁹¹ St. Gregory alludes in one instance to their power to preside over the trials of fellow bishops and he

⁸⁶ Cf. e.g., Hefele - Leclercq I 2 761: Canon I of the Council of Sardica forbids bishops to go from one see to another, οὐδεὶς γὰρ πώποτε εὐρεθῆναι ἐπισκόπων δεδύνηται ὃς ἀπὸ μείζονος πόλεως εἰς ἐλαχιστοτέραν πόλιν ἐσπούδασε μεταστῆναι. On the question of the authenticity of the Canons of Sardica cf. Fliche et Martin III 128, note 1.

⁸⁷ Ep. XXVI P 80.

⁸⁸ Ep. XXVII P 81-82. Cf. pp. 101 ff. *supra*.

⁸⁹ Ep. I P 10, 9-15.

⁹⁰ Cf. p. 87 *supra*.

⁹¹ Ep. XXVI P 81, 6-7.

indicates at the same time something of the procedure in such cases. In the course of his discussion of the unjustifiable conduct of Bishop Helladius, his metropolitan, toward him, St. Gregory asks: "What court of judgment came together to accuse me with a view to what has taken place or is suspected? What proof thoroughly refuted the wrong? What canons were read aloud against me? What lawful sentence of a bishop ratified the judgment against me? And if any of these procedures had taken place lawfully the trial would be wholly in accordance with my rank."⁹²

St. Gregory frequently refers in the *Contra Eunomium* to a trial of Eunomius. Since the occasion was apparently the deposition of the latter from the see of Cyzicus because of his heretical teachings an ecclesiastical trial, rather than one before civil tribunal, was in order.⁹³ However, the fact that the allusions are couched in the language used of law courts by the writers of Classical Greece derogates from their reliability as witnesses to the procedure in a fourth century ecclesiastical trial.⁹⁴

4. Activities of Bishops

Though a bishop was mainly responsible, as St. Gregory says,⁹⁵ for the spiritual guidance of the people in his own see, it frequently happened in the fourth century that a bishop was summoned by the people of a neighboring see, or assigned by a council of bishops, to put in order the affairs of a see temporarily without a bishop. St. Gregory was thus called in to assist in Jerusalem and the province of Arabia,⁹⁶ Nicomedia,⁹⁷ Ibora and Sebastea.⁹⁸ Neighboring bishops frequently met in conference to discuss various matters or came together to celebrate the liturgy. St. Gregory alludes casually

⁹² Ep. I P 9, 18-25. Cf. pp. 163 ff. *infra*; Hefele - Leclercq I 2 770. Church law prescribed the trial of a bishop by other bishops.

⁹³ Cf. "Eunomius" DTC V 1501-1514. On ecclesiastical trials cf. Fliche et Martin III 520-522.

⁹⁴ J I 40 - 48 *passim*; 374,30 - 375,3; J II 106, 1-3; similarly J I 65, 10-17.

⁹⁵ Ep. I P 10, 1-4.

⁹⁶ Ep. II P 15, 1-9. On the nature of the difficulties with which St. Gregory had to deal in Arabia cf. Duchesne II 623.

⁹⁷ Ep. XVII P 49 ff.

⁹⁸ Ep. XIX P 63,21 - 64,14.

several times to such meetings.⁹⁹ Thus, a bishop had to travel a great deal in line of duty. In this respect St. Gregory was typical of the bishops of his times.¹⁰⁰

On one occasion after returning from a journey, he sat down and wrote a letter describing the enthusiastic welcome he received. The account contains material of interest to the historian of life and times on many counts and especially for the vivid portrait it presents of the cordial relations existing between the bishop and his flock. He was apparently returning to Nyssa though the name is not mentioned explicitly.¹⁰¹ The route lay, he says, from the direction of Kelosina with a stop at Vestena, and from the latter town the road followed the river.¹⁰² The weather was unsettled and the travellers were forced to seek shelter several times from heavy thunderstorms. From Vestena on there was an unbroken line of people along the road "mingling much weeping with their joy." Just before St. Gregory and his party reached their destination, however, there was a heavy shower which apparently drove the welcoming throng to shelter, so that when the travellers drove up to the church no one perceived their arrival. But then, just as they stopped in the portico, "I know not whence or how," declares St. Gregory, "suddenly people appeared as if from a sort of mechanical device, packed closely in a circle around us so that there was no passable way down from the carriage, for it was not possible to find a spot empty of men."¹⁰³

⁹⁹ Ep. V 29,23 - 30,3; Ep. I P 3, 13-14; Ep. XIX 64, 5-17.

¹⁰⁰ In this connection, besides his journeys to the Roman province of Arabia, to Jerusalem, Iborra, and Sebastea already mentioned, we may recall his trip to Pontus to assist at the deathbed of his sister St. Macrina (Ep. XIX P 62-63), his visit to Vanota (Ep. XX P 66-70 *passim*), and the period of two years or so spent in exile. He was present at the Councils of Constantinople in 381 and 394. Cf. Hefele - Leclercq II, 5 and 98.

¹⁰¹ He calls his destination "our little town" (Ep. VI P 32,25 and 33, 8), and the other details of the letter make it quite certain that he meant Nyssa.

¹⁰² Ep. VI P 32-33. Diekamp, (1) 393 note 1, says that the journey described is either that from exile or from Sebastea. Pasquali, SIFC 101, thinks that, besides these possibilities, it may equally have been St. Gregory's return from Constantinople. The location of Vestena seems to rule out the latter city, however. Cf. Ramsay (3) map opp. p. 204.

¹⁰³ Ep. VI P 33, 4-20.

Then, having with some difficulty made his way through the crowd, St. Gregory and his companions took part in the formal ceremony of welcome inside the church. "And when we were inside the colonnade, we saw a stream of fire flowing into the church; for the choir of virgins carrying lights made of wax in their hand were walking together in procession down along the entrance to the church lighting it up wholly with their torches."¹⁰⁴ They then followed the procession into the church and prayed there. After St. Gregory had thus, as he says, "rejoiced and wept with" his people, he finished the prayer and repaired immediately to write the letter from which we have been quoting.¹⁰⁵

5. Relations of Bishops with One Another

St. Gregory describes the close ties between his church and that of Nicomedia of which he mentions two bishops: Patricius and Euphrasius, who had been very cordially disposed toward him.¹⁰⁶

But in another letter he gives an account of personal friction between his metropolitan, Bishop Helladius of Caesarea, and himself. Since the situation touches him so keenly, he writes with less rhetorical polish and precision than usual and hence more humanly. Thus it has seemed worthwhile to repeat his narrative in some detail for the sake of the portrait that it gives of two fourth century bishops "without their miters."

Both had been set up as canons of orthodoxy by the Emperor Theodosius shortly before the curious incident of which St. Gregory

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* 20-25. These virgins were very likely the fourth century counterpart of present day nuns. Cf. Pasquali SIFC 101-102.

¹⁰⁵ Ep. VI P 33,25 - 34,5. Ramsay, (4) 246, recounts an experience which happened to him in modern times in the same vicinity and which seems to witness to the survival of the custom of turning out to welcome the bishop with some ceremony. The Bishop of Kaisari (Caesarea) was expected at one of the Greek villages of Cappadocia. "Most of the population was gathered to welcome him, and the priests with a choir of boys headed the procession that was coming forth to meet him and welcome him." At sight of Ramsay and his party, "the choir struck up a hymn, the priests made various motions with their hands, and everybody raised his voice in welcome." The mistake in identity was, of course, discovered and rectified.

¹⁰⁶ Ep. XVII P 49, 12-23.

writes occurred. In giving his approval to the acts and decrees of the Council of Constantinople of 381 Theodosius decreed that to be of the orthodox belief Christians must be in communion with certain bishops among whom he named Helladius, Bishop of Caesarea, and Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa.¹⁰⁷ They were therefore among the most prominent bishops of their day. For reasons which are not quite clear¹⁰⁸ relations between them gradually became very strained. St. Gregory tells his correspondent that he had heard many reports of the unfriendly feeling which Helladius had for him, reports to which he gave no credence at first because of his consciousness of his own innocence.¹⁰⁹ Rumors of the same tenor multiplied so much that St. Gregory decided he ought to do something to rectify matters before the affair should strike deep roots. In this interest he wrote a number of letters¹¹⁰ to persons who could intercede for him.

Matters stood thus when the Bishop of Nyssa, on his way home after concluding services in honor of the martyrs in Sebastea,¹¹¹ heard that Bishop Helladius was in the neighboring mountain district conducting martyrs' memorial services. At first St. Gregory continued on his journey to Nyssa, thinking it better for their meeting to take place later at the metropolis, Caesarea. But upon hearing a rumor that Helladius was ill, erroneously as the sequel proved, he immediately set out on an arduous journey into the mountains to visit the ailing prelate. The region was in fact so mountainous that it could be traversed only by a combination of riding horseback and climbing on foot, but St. Gregory persevered steadily even in the darkness for fifteen miles until he arrived at the mountain village¹¹² where Helladius was officiating with two other bishops. In the early hours of the day the weary travellers looked down from the brow of a hill near the village upon an assembly of the faithful gathered in the open air near the martyrion. By the time St. Gregory and his companions had slowly descended

and reached the shrine of the martyrs, Helladius had just gone to a nearby residence and the congregation had not yet dispersed.

A messenger was at once dispatched to inform Helladius of St. Gregory's arrival, and a second message was sent by Helladius' deacon who arrived on the scene shortly after. Meanwhile, the Bishop of Nyssa sat in the open air under the hot sun waiting to be invited indoors. He describes how his physical distress was augmented by the embarrassment resulting from the presence of a curious throng of villagers who stood about, staring and pointing at him. Ecclesiastical etiquette evidently required that he should not repair indoors until invited to do so by the presiding bishop,¹¹³ for he remained thus until at about noon the shrine was opened and he was allowed to enter though the crowd was barred for a time. Helladius had already taken his place in the sanctuary, preferring it would seem to surround the interview with as much formality as possible. By this time the Bishop of Nyssa was fervently wishing he had not come. Restraining his emotions, however, he entered the shrine, leaning heavily on his deacon's arm. After addressing a word of greeting to Helladius, he stood for a moment waiting for an invitation to be seated. None was forthcoming, not even a nod of recognition, so the spurned, but increasingly indignant Gregory sank wearily upon a seat some distance away, and awaited the pleasure of Helladius. Thereupon ensued a strange interval of silence, both sitting with gloomy, downcast looks. St. Gregory for his part details his own doleful reflections indulged in at this time, upon the pride and overweening conceit of the other, so different, he reflects, from the charity of the Master Who received the kiss of Judas and entered the house of Simon the leper.

At length, after conquering a temptation to exhibit his own hurt feelings, St. Gregory inquired meekly the cause of Helladius' obviously unfriendly attitude. The latter gave a vague reply to

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Hefele - Leclercq II, 41.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. note 115 *infra*.

¹⁰⁹ Here and in the following pages I follow Ep. I P 1-10, *passim*.

¹¹⁰ Not extant.

¹¹¹ Cf. pp. 172-173 *infra*.

¹¹² He calls it Andamucena. Cf. chap. II note 60 *supra*.

¹¹³ For examples of prescriptions regarding the order of precedence and other details of etiquette among the clergy cf. Hefele - Leclercq I, 610 ff. and II, 115-116; especially 33: When a bishop or a priest comes into the Church of one of his colleagues to visit it, he must be received according to his rank and be invited to preach and to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice. 34: When a bishop seats himself, wherever he may be, he must not leave any priest standing.

which St. Gregory made answer by declaring, "Among men lies have much power to deceive, but the divine judgment does not admit misunderstanding arising from deceit. In regard to my relations with you my conscience permits me to pray for forgiveness of my other sins, but if anything has been done by me against you (to pray), that this remain unforgiven forever."¹¹⁴ Helladius became extremely indignant at this speech but would allow no proofs of St. Gregory's innocence to be given. Though it was past noon, he offered to the latter neither the comfort of food nor of the bath, but without a friendly word permitted him to retrace his steps over the painful route which he had traversed that morning, his mission a failure. To add to St. Gregory's discomfort while en route he was overtaken by one of the frequent Cappadocian thunderstorms, and he and his companions were drenched to the skin before again reaching their conveyance.

Just what Helladius' grievances were never becomes clear from St. Gregory's narrative,¹¹⁵ and we have not his side of the story, but none the less his churlish behavior would scarce become the episcopal dignity. St. Gregory rightly concludes that Helladius had no justification for heaping public insults and humiliations upon him. He himself, however, betrays his own smarting human nature in the oft repeated comparison he makes of himself with Helladius, a comparison in which in his own estimation he is by no means found wanting. His priestly dignity, family, culture, knowledge are all equal to those of Helladius, he says.¹¹⁶ He ends by the "pious" but very human wish that God will deflate the overweening pride and conceit of Helladius.

6. Famous Episcopal Traditions

While pointing out to the Church in Nicomedia the qualities they should look for in choosing a new bishop, St. Gregory makes in-

¹¹⁴ Ep. I P 8, 2-8.

¹¹⁵ Pasquali, SIFC 122-123, suggests that Helladius was jealous because St. Gregory, the bishop of a small see, had been equalized with him, the metropolitan, by the decree of Theodosius mentioned above. See note 107 *supra*.

¹¹⁶ This appears to lend color to Pasquali's hypothesis.

formative reference to several bishops famous in the history of the Church. After recalling that St. Peter, a poor fisherman, was the first Bishop of Rome "The Mesopotamians," he says, "though they had among themselves satraps who were wealthy, approved Thomas for their bishop as more honorable than all."¹¹⁷ In the notion of St. Thomas the Apostle as Bishop in Mesopotamia St. Gregory has evidently been influenced by the honor paid the relics of St. Thomas in Edessa, the city to which they were translated from India where, according to tradition, he had preached the gospel and died.¹¹⁸ St. Gregory's reference implies at any rate that the cult of St. Thomas in Mesopotamia was well known in his day.¹¹⁹

The Cretans, he goes on to say, chose Titus as their bishop¹²⁰ the people of Jerusalem, James,¹²¹ "and we Cappadocians, the centurion who during the Passion confessed the divinity of the Lord."¹²² This is probably the locus classicus for St. Longinus as first bishop of Caesarea.¹²³ St. Longinus is represented in Christian tradition as having lived for some years after the death of Christ in Cappadocia, suffering martyrdom at Caesarea.¹²⁴ As a result of this tradition the Cappadocians seem to have identified the centurion of the Gospels with one of their first bishops.¹²⁵

7. The Clergy

St. Gregory refers specifically to the deacon who accompanied him as "my deacon,"¹²⁶ and to the deacon "who was in attendance

¹¹⁷ Ep. XVII P 52, 18-28.

¹¹⁸ Cf. Quentin 349, 658-659. For a summary of the facts and traditions about St. Thomas the Apostle together with sources cf. "Thomas, hl., Apostel" LTK X 109-112.

¹¹⁹ Delahaye, (1) 212-213, says that it is impossible actually to clear up the question of the cult of St. Thomas in Mesopotamia.

¹²⁰ Cf. *ibid.* 226; Euseb. *H.E.* III 4, 5.

¹²¹ Cf. Delahaye (1) 184-185; "Jacques le Mineur" DACL VII 2109 ff.

¹²² Ep. XVII P 52, 25 - 53, 5.

¹²³ Cf. PG XLVI 1062, note 48.

¹²⁴ Cf. Quentin 146. The tradition is not unanimous, however. For a summary of the traditions and the acts of his martyrdom, see Acta SS. (2) 376-390.

¹²⁵ Delahaye (1) 175.

¹²⁶ Ep. I P 4, 17-18; 3, 23-24.

upon" Bishop Helladius.¹²⁷ Possibly these held the office of "the deacon of the bishop" which had become a permanent ecclesiastical position by the fourth century.¹²⁸ In the *Letters* there is also a reference to a presbyter.¹²⁹

The shocked tone of St. Gregory's allusions in the *Contra Eunomium* to the reviling of priests by Eunomius, testifies to the presence of an attitude of reverence for the priesthood among the audience for whom the work was intended.¹³⁰

C. CHRISTIAN LIFE AND CUSTOMS

1. Holydays and Festivals

In his *Letters* St. Gregory makes several rather informative allusions to festivals and holydays. "It is customary with the Romans," he reminds his correspondent Libanius, "to celebrate a festival at about the winter solstice according to the practice of their ancestors when, as the sun moves back into its upper position, the span of day begins to increase in length; and the beginning of the month is esteemed as holy, and by this day forecasting the character of the whole year they eagerly take part in certain activities that bring good luck, not only banquetings but also carousals."¹³¹ The Roman festival to which he refers is the popular one celebrated on January first, often with shameful excesses bitterly deplored by the Church Fathers.¹³² The feature of the celebration upon which St. Gregory lays stress is the giving of gifts,¹³³ gracefully characterizing a letter from Libanius as a gift more precious than gold.

This pagan custom of giving gifts as part of the celebration of a festival was also a usual feature of Christian practice in fourth

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ Cf. "Diacre" DACL IV 741-742.

¹²⁹ Ep. XXVI P 81, 8-10.

¹³⁰ Cf. e.g., J I 29,26 - 30,13.

¹³¹ Ep. XIV P 44, 8-13. Pasquali considers this letter a studied imitation of an epistle of Libanius and for that reason merely an exercise in artificial ecphrasis. Cf. SIFC 106-110.

¹³² Cf. "Circoncision (Fête de la), II Le 1^{er} des calendes de janvier et les débauches païennes" DACL I 1717-1728, esp. 1719-1721.

¹³³ Cf. "Strenae" DS IV 1530-1532; "Janus" DS III 614.

century Cappadocia, as St. Gregory testifies in another letter. "It is customary on these general holy-days for us to make manifest in every way the affection lying in our souls, and everywhere people bringing presents give proof of their good will by personal gifts . . ." he asserts. He is referring this time to the festivals of Christmas and Easter.¹³⁴ It has long been felt that the custom of giving Christmas gifts is very old and its origin has been traced as a gradual development under the influence of the pagan "Strenae" or New Year's gifts. The view that this development took place despite the fulminations of the Church Fathers directed against the pagan customs connected with the first day of January is modified somewhat by St. Gregory's reference. The latter implies that the custom of exchanging gifts at Christmas and Easter was accepted and approved by Christians in Cappadocia in the fourth century without any consciousness of conflict or objectionable connection with pagan practice. Actually in many external features the early Church borrowed from paganism.¹³⁵

After reminding his correspondent—as we have indicated above—of their custom of giving gifts on a festival day, St. Gregory goes on to say that the gift he sends on this Easter is the letter itself. With conventional modesty he protests its simplicity of style (whereas in reality it is highly rhetorical) and declares that its true worth resides in its content. This statement in itself is significant for our purpose, since the content of the letter is a mystical interpretation of the fitness of the dates at which Christmas and Easter were then celebrated. The attaching to the letter the value of a gift precisely because of this content implies that there was still something novel in the date at which these celebrations were then held, and perhaps some need of instruction in that regard on the part of his correspondent. Most important of all, the letter gives direct testimony to the date of the celebration of Christmas and Easter in Cappadocia during the last quarter of the fourth century.

Only in the early fourth century had the Council of Nicaea specifically designated that Easter be celebrated each year at the

¹³⁴ Ep. IV P 26, 9-16.

¹³⁵ Cf. "Strenae" DS IV 1532; Delahaye (1) 412; Botte, 61-62.

full moon after the vernal equinox.¹³⁶ That date was gradually adopted by the whole Church, though some divergence persisted for about two centuries. The letter to which we have been referring makes it plain that the Church in central Asia Minor had already adopted this date for celebrating Easter when St. Gregory wrote.

It was during the first half of the fourth century that December twenty-fifth was adopted for the celebration of Christmas in the Roman Church. Later this date was gradually observed by the entire Church.¹³⁷ St. Gregory's letter states plainly that, when he wrote, Christmas was celebrated in the environs on the day of the winter solstice¹³⁸ and that date was December twenty-fifth according to the Roman calendar.¹³⁹ Hence this letter is an important addition to the list of sources indicative of the gradual spread of the observance of December twenty-fifth as Christmas.¹⁴⁰

Various theories have been propounded to account for the selection by the Church of these particular dates for Easter and Christmas.¹⁴¹ St. Gregory's letter may be taken as additional evidence in support of the theory that the choice of December twenty-fifth was

¹³⁶ i.e., on the Sunday following the first full moon after the vernal equinox. Previously the date of the celebration of Easter had varied in different sections of the Church, though the feast had been consistently observed annually by all Christians from the time of Christ. In fact the feast of the Resurrection from the very first had a position of preëminence in the calendar of the Church. On the whole question of the celebration of Easter, cf. the very complete and well documented article "Pâques" by Leclercq in *DACL* XIII 1521-1574, esp. 1552; Duchesne (2) 1-42; Hefele - Leclercq I, 450-477: "Solution de la question pascale."

¹³⁷ The exact day on which Christ was born is not known. The feast of the nativity of Christ was of late origin; in fact the question of its origins has been the subject of a lively controversy. When it began to be commemorated in the East, it was at first usually kept with the Epiphany on January sixth though this was not the only date observed. At about the time when the East adopted the twenty-fifth of December as Christmas, the West began also to celebrate January sixth as the Epiphany, and both feasts continued to be observed throughout the Church. Cf. Duchesne (1) 248-249 and 258; "Nativité de Jésus" *DACL* XII 910-913; Botte *passim*.

¹³⁸ Ep. IV P 25,20 - 26,1.

¹³⁹ Cf. "Nativité de Jésus" *DACL* XII 915.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 918-926 esp. 921 (Nysse). The *Letters* and the *Contra Eunomium* are not mentioned as sources here though others of St. Gregory's works are.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.* 913-915.

a deliberate attempt to supplant the popular pagan feast of the *Natalis Invicti*.¹⁴² The "Invictus" was the sun which each year the pagans thought was born again on the winter solstice, December twenty-fifth, since after that date it begins to shine more brightly and for a longer period each day. The idea of Christ as the mystic Sun of Justice was a popular one among early Christian writers who found inspiration for the idea in the Scriptures.¹⁴³ What more natural than that, since the actual date of Christ's birth was unknown, the birth of the Sun of Justice should be celebrated on the day when the sun comes into new life? And at the same time the Christian celebrations would offset those of the pagans on that day.

As previously remarked St. Gregory's interpretation lends credence to this view.¹⁴⁴ Why is it, he asks, that He Who holds the universe in His grasp appears in the flesh at the time "when the night has advanced to its greatest length and the nightly increase no longer receives an addition?" Then too, there is the question why it is precisely at the time when the days are as long as the nights that He restored life to man by His death and resurrection. In answer to his own questions St. Gregory explains that sin and evil may be compared to darkness, and Christ, to the sun. The Sun of Justice rose upon the night of sin with the coming of Christ, and the advance of evil was checked by the increasing light; hence the date of the birth of Christ is appropriately set at the winter solstice. The feast of the Resurrection occurs after the vernal equinox to indicate that there will no longer be an indecisive struggle between vice and virtue, but that the life of light will prevail, the darkness of idolatry melting away.

2. The Cult of Martyrs

It is readily apparent from the writings of the Cappadocian Fathers that the honoring of martyrs was a singularly intense cult

¹⁴² Very often the Church has replaced the most popular pagan festivals by her own proper solemnities, attempting thereby to wean Christians away from the pagan observance. Cf. *ibid.* 909 and 915-918; Botte 61-67.

¹⁴³ "Nativité de Jésus" *DACL* XII 915.

¹⁴⁴ For the following paragraph, cf. Ep. IV P 25-28 *passim*. St. Gregory expresses ideas similar to those found here in *In Nat. Chr.* PG XLVI 1129 B-D; 1132 C-D; 1145 D; 1149 B.

in Cappadocia. Nowhere before the end of the fourth century can there be found more fervor and enthusiasm in celebrating the feasts of the martyrs.¹⁴⁵ Possibly this is what St. Gregory had in mind when, in writing to discourage consecrated men and women from leaving their monasteries or convents in Cappadocia to make pilgrimages to the Holy Land, he declares, "One would not be able to enumerate in the whole world as many altars as there are among them (that is, the Cappadocians) through which the name of the Lord is magnified."¹⁴⁶

Another letter makes casual mention of services in honor of the martyrs in such a way as to imply that such functions were of common occurrence. In recounting the story of his disturbing interview with Bishop Helladius,¹⁴⁷ St. Gregory dates the incident by stating that it happened while he was returning to his own church from an ecclesiastical mission in Sebastea. He had been "officiating at the commemoration of most blessed Peter¹⁴⁸ which was for the first time being celebrated at Sebastea," having at the same time joined the people there in commemorating the martyrs customarily honored by them at that time.¹⁴⁹ As he wended his way homeward,

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Delahaye (1) 172.

¹⁴⁶ Ep. II P 14, 4-6.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. pp. 163 ff. *supra*.

¹⁴⁸ Possibly his brother St. Peter, Bishop of Sebastea; however, several facts argue against this conclusion in the present state of our knowledge: first, St. Gregory's brother Peter is commemorated in the *Martyrol. Hieronym.*, Quentin 163, on March 26 and in the *Acta SS* (1) 588-591, on January 11. Neither date fits in with St. Gregory's frequent references in the same letter to the excessive heat on the day of his visit to Helladius. Second, the year of St. Peter's death is not known. Cf. note 149 *infra*; P 2, note 14; SIFC 123-124; Delahaye (1) 178-179; (2) 405.

¹⁴⁹ Ep. I P 2, 13-18. The identity of these martyrs cannot be established with certainty. The well-known Forty Martyrs of Sebastea immediately come to mind. So strongly does Pasquali feel this that he incorporates into his text the emendation suggested by Jaeger τῶν ἁγίων [μ.] μαρτύρων (P 2, 16). Delahaye, (2) 405, objects to this on the ground that "la designation du groupe par un chiffre n'est pas de style à cette époque." Besides, the *Martyrol. Hieronym.*, Quentin 134, gives March 9 as the date for the commemoration of the Forty Martyrs and this date is too widely separated from that of St. Peter (March 26) as noted above, to fit in with St. Gregory's narrative. The heat mentioned several times in the context also precludes the month of March. Delahaye suggests that possibly a second commemoration of these

he heard that Helladius was likewise conducting services in honor of the martyrs at a nearby mountain village¹⁵⁰ and decided to visit him, with what unpleasant consequences we have seen.

The details of the service mentioned by St. Gregory are meager and insignificant, for there was no point in detailing at length something with which all were very familiar. We gather merely that Helladius and his congregation assembled near the shrine shortly after dawn and held services out-of-doors. After this Helladius retired to a near-by house whence he emerged at about midday to repair to the interior of the martyrs' shrine apparently for another religious service, for the members of the congregation were still at hand.¹⁵¹

3. Miscellaneous Features of the Christian Cult

St. Gregory notes that the day of his visit to Helladius was the Sabbath and this, added to the fact that it was a commemoration of martyrs, appears to have given the day a special significance in his eyes, for he deems Helladius' behavior more blameworthy from the circumstance that he was guilty of it on such a day.¹⁵² This is additional evidence that the Sabbath was assigned a special place in the Church liturgy even after the Sunday had been substituted for it, with certain modifications, to be sure, in its observance especially with regard to the strictness of the prescribed rest. In the East during the fourth century it was a day of Synaxes and even of liturgical Synaxes.¹⁵³

In the *Contra Eunomium* there is specific reference to the fact that the following were commonly accepted features of Christian practice in fourth century Cappadocia: "the sign of the cross, prayer, Baptism, the confession of sins. . ."¹⁵⁴

martyrs was made on August 27, when they are again mentioned in the *Martyrol. Hieronym.*, Quentin 471. If so, the Peter mentioned by St. Gregory is not his brother. Cf. Delahaye (1) 178-179.

¹⁵⁰ Probably the same martyrs as those just commemorated at Sebastea by St. Gregory. Cf. *ibid*.

¹⁵¹ Ep. I P 3, 10-21 and 4, 8-18. On the method of commemorating the martyrs in the fourth century, cf. Delahaye (1) 44-49.

¹⁵² Ep. I P 8, 11-26.

¹⁵³ Cf. Duchesne (1) 218-221; "Dimanche" DACL IV 947 ff.

¹⁵⁴ J II 270,30 - 271,5.

St. Gregory testifies incidentally to the popularity of St. Paul's writings in his day when he says, "But I do not think it necessary to cite in detail the words of Paul since they are in almost all men's mouths."¹⁵⁵ There is also a casual reference to the continuity of Christian tradition when he alludes to "the things which are read in the churches continuously from ancient times to the present."¹⁵⁶

St. Gregory mentions the fact of the services in honor of the martyrs taking place out-of-doors as if it were commonplace.¹⁵⁷ We know that fourth century Christians also assembled for prayer and worship in their churches and chapels which were then multiplying rapidly. The favorite groundplan for a martyr's shrine was cruciform, according to St. Gregory. In detailing the plan of the martyrion which he was interested in having constructed he says its shape is to be cruciform "as we see it done everywhere."¹⁵⁸

That the church in Nyssa was at least a fairly imposing structure is plain from several features of its architecture to which St. Gregory casually alludes in describing his arrival there on one occasion.¹⁵⁹ Likewise, his reference to the bishop's throne and seats situated at some distance from it in the mountain martyrs' shrine implies some degree of spaciousness, even in this chapel situated in a remote spot.¹⁶⁰ These observations testify to the fact that as soon as the Christians were free to meet openly for the worship of God and the honoring of His saints they tended to make their places of worship as grand as possible. The many details mentioned in Letter XXV regarding the martyr's shrine in which St. Gregory was interested attest still further the desire prevalent among fourth century Christians to make churches and chapels of a grandeur fitting the sublime purpose for which they were intended.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁵ J II 255, 16-17.

¹⁵⁶ J II 304, 20-22.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. pp. 164 and 173 *supra*.

¹⁵⁸ Ep. XXV P 77, 5-8. Cf. chap. I note 181. Even in modern times a similar preference in church architecture is observed in these regions. Cf. Tozer, *Turkish Armenia and Eastern Asia Minor*, 143.

¹⁵⁹ Ep. VI P 33, 11-25. For a discussion of the occasion and of the fact that the place was Nyssa though he does not mention it by name cf. p. 162 *supra*.

¹⁶⁰ Ep. I P 4, 20-21.

¹⁶¹ Cf. Ep. XXV P 76-80, *passim*. See also Delahaye (1) 46-49.

4. Life Consecrated to God

In his letter regarding pilgrimages St. Gregory addresses his remarks to men and women living lives consecrated to God in the religious state.¹⁶² By the middle of the fourth century it had become common practice for such ascetics to live in communities apart from the secular world and according to a fixed rule.¹⁶³ St. Gregory strongly advises against their leaving the seclusion of their convents or monasteries to make pilgrimages of devotion, even those to the Holy Land. He states that so many religious have adopted these journeys of devotion that the practice has become a real abuse.¹⁶⁴ His chief objection is that in making such pilgrimages, because of the miserable conditions of travel serious danger menaced what he plainly considered the basic characteristic of religious life: chastity.¹⁶⁵

Besides testifying to the bare fact of the existence of religious communities of men and of women in fourth century Cappadocia, as well as to the conception of chastity as the basic virtue of that state, St. Gregory witnesses to other current fourth century ideas and customs of religious life. He speaks of those who have "once for all dedicated themselves to the higher life," implying thereby the permanency and stability of that state. It was not a way of life to be lightly adopted and as lightly cast aside.¹⁶⁶

The very numerous periphrases by which St. Gregory designates the religious state themselves testify to contemporaneous esteem

¹⁶² Cf. Ep. II P 11-17.

¹⁶³ In the beginning of the Christian era individual asceticism was practiced while living at home engaged in ordinary avocations. Because of the difficulty of this procedure ascetics began to seek silence and solitude by retiring from the world and living apart. A later development took place when these solitaries began to live in groups together according to a fixed rule. Cf. Duchesne (1) 404; Fliche et Martin III 299-369; Pourrat I 57 and 117-160.

¹⁶⁴ Ep. II P 11,12 - 12,19.

¹⁶⁵ P 12,13 - 13,20. Cf. pp. 47-48 *supra*. It was so considered from the beginning of the Christian era. Cf. Pourrat I 58-71.

¹⁶⁶ Ep. II P 11,5. Church legislation of the time witnesses especially to the permanence of the vow of virginity. The marriage of a person obligated by such a vow was considered a sacrilege. Cf. Mansi III, 1134; Hefele - Leclercq I 229; Koch, 111; Pourrat I 65.

for that state of life. For example, he calls it "the higher life,"¹⁶⁷ "the life according to God,"¹⁶⁸ "the holy way of life,"¹⁶⁹ "the life according to philosophy."¹⁷⁰

His laudatory description of the life of the community of virgins over whom his sister St. Macrina was presiding as religious superior at the time of her death, though requiring to be read with the thought of its eulogistic purpose well in mind, still has something to contribute to our picture of religious life in the fourth century.¹⁷¹ It witnesses first of all to the fact of a large group of consecrated virgins living apart from the secular world under the spiritual guidance of one of their number acknowledged as their superior. Besides this it attests that the following features, which are to-day still actively practiced by religious communities of women, were an important part also of the life of female ascetics in the fourth century: nocturnal prayer, the observance of silence, the chanting of liturgical prayers, fasting, mortification of the senses, obedience to the superior.¹⁷²

The custom of changing one's name on entering a monastery at the act of monastic profession is attested by an allusion in another letter. St. Gregory sends this letter of recommendation with a "son" who to all appearances is a member of a community of male ascetics and whom he calls "Basil, formerly Diogenes." He expresses the hope that through the good influence of this monk, his correspondent will also take upon himself "the higher life."¹⁷³

Both St. Gregory and St. Basil had been monks before becoming bishops. Even after assuming the dignity of the episcopate both clung to the ascetic life. In the case of St. Basil his brother never

¹⁶⁷ Ep. XXI P 71, 5-6.

¹⁶⁸ Ep. II P 12, 19.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.* 20.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.* 21-22.

¹⁷¹ The question of the origins of feminine asceticism and the progress of its organization is a much neglected field of research. Cf. "Nonne" DACL XII 1560.

¹⁷² Ep. XIX P 62,12 - 63,2. Cf. pp. 37 and 41 *supra*. For the life and virtues of St. Macrina the Younger cf. chap. II note 6 *supra*. On the number of communities of virgins in the fourth century and their way of life cf. Pourrat I 71-82 and 119-121.

¹⁷³ Ep. XXI P 70,17 - 71,7. For a discussion of the authorship of the letter, the identity of the bearer and also of the recipient, cf. Pasquali SIFC 99-102.

tires of extolling the admirable characteristics of "the man of God, the mouth of piety, Basil."¹⁷⁴ As regards the Bishop of Nyssa himself several references in his letters imply that when required, much against his will, to leave the cloister in order to assume the arduous responsibilities of the episcopate,¹⁷⁵ he continued to live the life of an ascetic as far as he could.

During an absence from his see¹⁷⁶ St. Gregory lists to a correspondent the things he misses. Besides being lonely for relatives and friends he also longs for his "hearth, table, storehouse, straw mattress, bench, sackcloth, seclusion, prayer, weeping."¹⁷⁷ The desire for these things which are usually associated with a cloistered life seems to indicate that St. Gregory even after becoming a bishop clung to the simplicity of the ascetic life.¹⁷⁸ Another indication of this is found in Letter II where St. Gregory assures his correspondent that during his visit to the Holy Land on official business his conveyance which had been furnished him by the Emperor, "served us as church and monastery, since during the whole journey we all sang psalms together and fasted together in the Lord."¹⁷⁹

Another allusion implies that St. Gregory continued to wear at least one article of the religious habit: the cincture, though not always openly.¹⁸⁰

A basic principle of the monastic life as conceived by St. Basil and as practiced to the present day is poverty—not the abject poverty of real want—but rather poverty of spirit consisting of dependence upon the superior for one's material needs and an attitude of detachment toward the possession of the goods of this world.¹⁸¹ In this respect also there is evidence that St. Gregory continued to practice monastic ascetism after becoming a bishop.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁴ J I 21, 10-11; 44, 25-27; 53, 9-13; 63, 15-27. Cf. p. 41 *supra*.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. "Gregoire de Nysse" DTC VI 1847-1852; Bas. Ep. 225.

¹⁷⁶ Cf. note 85 *supra*.

¹⁷⁷ Ep. XVIII P 57,20 - 58,5.

¹⁷⁸ For a discussion of this point cf. Pasquali SIFC 83 ff.

¹⁷⁹ Ep. II P 15, 9-14.

¹⁸⁰ Ep. XVIII P 59, 3-4. Pasquali, SIFC 85, discusses this point and the customary use of the cincture by religious living under the rule of St. Basil.

¹⁸¹ Cf. Fliche et Martin III 344.

¹⁸² Cf. e.g., Ep. XIV P 44, 16-20 and Ep. XXV P 80, 10-11. See also pp. 158-159 *supra*.

CHAPTER V

THE TESTIMONY OF THE LETTERS AND THE CONTRA EUNOMIUM TO FOURTH CENTURY LIFE AND TIMES

The more obvious claims of the *Letters* and the *Contra Eunomium* as witnesses to their times have already been vindicated by historical curiosity in several fields and especially in those of politics and church history in the narrow sense. The present investigation of these two works has succeeded in uncovering not a few items, both within and outside these fields, which help tell the story of the times. The evidence provided by the multitude of casual and even trivial allusions assembled here does not appreciably widen the horizons of our knowledge of the fourth century, to be sure, but it is of value in clarifying and filling in the outlines suggested by other testimony. The incidental character of many of the allusions enhances their worth to the historian of life and times since they are so evidently impartial testimony.

I

The references to the economic and professional life of St. Gregory's day in the *Letters* and the *Contra Eunomium* are for the most part of this casual and commonplace character and merely corroborate, or elaborate but slightly, information extracted from elsewhere. In some instances, however, allusions to labor and wages and to occupations are enlightening.

Climate and weather, and the soil and its products are referred to incidentally a number of times, but our knowledge of these features of the Anatolian plateau is not materially increased thereby.

As to fruits, the grape, the apple, the pear and several varieties of the peach are named as being carefully cultivated at Vanota. St. Gregory also notes the oak and the plane-tree among the plants there. From the description of Vanota it is implied that methods

of scientific gardening were known to and practiced by some of St. Gregory's contemporaries in that section of Asia Minor. Apart from these references to the products of the soil which were to be found at Vanota, there is also very casual mention of the vine, grain, figs and the herb chamomile. The rose is the only flower specifically named.

St. Gregory's references to timber corroborate the fact that Cappadocia was remarkable for its lack of that building material except on the slopes of Mt. Argaeus near Caesarea.

The few casual references to metals have to do with the trade of smith. They merely convey the information that in fourth century Asia Minor a man engaged in that occupation could ordinarily make from iron such objects as a shovel, a fish-hook, shoe-makers' tools, or a gimlet. Lead, tin, gold, copper, bronze are also metals which the smith is represented as being able to work.

The sea receives only colorless and conventional mention from the land-locked Gregory.

The matter-of-fact tone of a casual allusion to an aqueduct, made by way of illustration, seems to indicate that aqueducts were no novelty in the Asia Minor of his day. This bears out the testimony of other sources that the conservation of the water supply has ever been a pressing problem in that region, especially in Cappadocia.

A casual allusion attests that the fire-resisting property of the mineral asbestos was commonplace knowledge in the fourth century.

Many of St. Gregory's references to the animal kingdom are illustrative of the allusiveness so widely practiced in antiquity but are not illuminating with regard to the fauna of St. Gregory's times. A few are somewhat more informing. He witnesses to a belief of his time in the efficacy of myrrh as an aid in snaring pigeons. He also attests that bird-lime was used by his contemporaries for the purpose of trapping birds. Reference is made to the peacock and the nightingale, and to mimicry of the cry of birds. The fact of the migration of birds in central Asia Minor in that day is implied.

Interesting mention is made of fish in connection with St. Gregory's visit to Vanota. His account of the tame fish he saw

in the fish-pools located on the estate implies that the fad, cultivated by wealthy Romans during the first centuries of our era, of maintaining artificial fish-ponds on their country estates could be duplicated elsewhere than in Italy by the fourth century. St. Gregory's delighted wonder at what he saw at Vanota does not seem to indicate, however, that such fish-pools were sufficiently common in his corner of the world for him to be familiar with them.

References to the salamander make it clear that St. Gregory shared the false idea common among other writers of classical antiquity that the salamander could pass through flames unscathed and that it originates by spontaneous generation from a chill vapor issuing from the depths of the firebrands.

In the paucity of St. Gregory's references to the horse he presents a decided contrast to St. Basil who in this respect evinces to a greater degree the influence of his native Cappadocia, a country which has always been noted for its horses.

There are a number of allusions—more or less informing—to professions and crafts. The information is incidentally imparted that particular trades or skills were learned in St. Gregory's day from a master by an apprentice. In several instances he casually alludes to the necessity of thorough training to produce efficient workers.

A number of details connected with the trade of smith turn up. St. Gregory pictures him as plying his trade with his hammer, bellows, and anvil under a tent made of hair and implies that he could display considerable skill in workmanship. Nevertheless he implies that the trade of smith was not remunerative in his day. Other crafts such as those of weaver, shoemaker, and carpenter are alluded to casually, and commonplace reference made to their tools and products.

Several references to agriculture occur. Taken together they present a picture of the life of the contemporary farmer of that day as toilsome and poorly paid, but honest and respectable.

The medical profession enjoyed high standing in the Asia Minor of St. Gregory's day. Physicians in good repute were esteemed and he implies friendly relations on his part with medical men in some instances. He attests also, however, the existence of charlatans in

the field who, attracted by the wealth which some physicians were reputed to have gained, set themselves up in the profession after serving a brief apprenticeship to someone already established in it. The ease with which Aëtius followed this program brings into sharper relief the obvious fact of the absence of standardizing agencies in the professional world of the fourth century. We have from St. Gregory graphic reference to the disorderly medical meetings of the day, peopled largely by these independent practitioners who vociferated arguments on a variety of subjects both within and without the field of medicine.

Some interesting items concerning architecture and sculpture in fourth century Cappadocia are gleaned from Letter XXV. One item important for the history of Christian art is the explicit assertion that the cruciform arrangement proposed for the shrine described in the latter was a common type of church architecture at the time. Also informative is the statement that the material used in its construction was to be fire-baked brick and native stone, with a roof of masonry.

References furnishing information about fourth century architecture are also found in St. Gregory's description of the estate at Vanota. The most interesting item is the description of the curious triangular portico and adjoining dining room in which he seems to have spent most of his time during the visit. The triangular shape of the portico and pool is a decided novelty in Greek and Roman architecture as we know it. The number and size of the buildings mentioned implies that the estate at Vanota must have been large and somewhat luxurious, an inference interesting in the light of the traditional backwardness of the interior of Asia Minor.

The commonplace character of the profession of scribe or secretary in the fourth century is implied by St. Gregory's very matter-of-fact allusion to the circumstance that Eunomius had been a student of shorthand at one stage of his career and was for a time employed as a scribe.

Other occupations to which transient reference is made, and which seem to have been plied by his contemporaries, are: the portrait painter, the overseer of an aqueduct, bath attendants, the dispenser of drugs.

Where St. Gregory mentions professions and crafts, incidental

information sometimes turns up regarding wages and conditions of labor in the fourth century. We learn that he considered the workmen from Iconium to be more skilled than those of Cappadocia and also more amenable about wages. The course followed by St. Gregory in contracting for workmen to build a martyr's shrine, as recounted in one of his letters, illustrates the customary procedure in building operations at that period.

With regard to wages the same letter furnishes specific evidence that in this case at least the workmen were to be paid by the day rather than by the job, and one reference implies that this was the usual line of action at the time. St. Gregory's indignant protest that the wages demanded for dressed stone-work by certain workmen of Cappadocia amounted to a gold piece for thirty workmen reveals that he considered this emolument very exorbitant. The fact that he is not specific as to what time was to be covered by this pay robs the reference of the significance it might have had regarding such matters as the fourth century standard of living and wage-scale. There is an interesting bit of information, however, in St. Gregory's casually adding the remark that "the usual meals are included with the gold-piece." The employer in this instance was expected to furnish some or perhaps all the meals of his workmen, and it seems to be implied that such a requirement was at that time by no means unusual.

It is an interesting commentary upon the embryonic character of relations between labor and capital in the fourth century that St. Gregory intimates that such precision as he displays about the terms of the contract is not the acceptable thing among his contemporaries. Many of them, he declares, will be inclined to rate him as penurious on that account.

A few rather commonplace references to poverty and wealth add little to what is known from other sources about these phases of fourth century life. In this connection St. Gregory declares explicitly that the Cappadocians in his day were poor in this world's goods.

II

Allusions witnessing to various phases of fourth century social and political life are unexpectedly abundant in the *Letters*

and the *Contra Eunomium*. Many, however, are casual and indirect and must be cautiously accepted as testimony in view of St. Gregory's tendency to indulge in rhetoric, in irony and even in querulousness.

From the few references to women one definite piece of information emerges, namely that women in the East in that day sometimes undertook long journeys and when so doing commonly travelled on horseback.

The evidence pertaining to contemporary fourth century morals confirms the testimony of other sources regarding both the moral degeneracy of the times in general and the undoubted moral excellence of many individuals. Thus St. Gregory deprecates the contentiousness, uncharitableness, and dishonesty which he has observed among some of his fellow Cappadocians, but declares that staunch faith and fervent devotion to the service of God are strong among many others. By reason of this stimulating leaven he declares that Cappadocia presented to him a refreshing contrast to the depressing spectacle which he had observed in a visit to Jerusalem where every species of immorality was only too openly evident. In Jerusalem too, however, he asserts that there were then some few Christians living holy and edifying lives.

His many references to the keen sufferings which his sensitive nature endured as a result of the malicious behavior of those who were in some way inimical to him are not, it is true, impartial testimony to the times. But they do insinuate something of the ethical temper of that day by their reiterated allusion to dishonesty, duplicity, deceit, and calloused acquiescence in evil on the part of many of St. Gregory's contemporaries in Asia Minor.

Besides testimony of this sort to the wickedness of the times there are also references which witness to the spirit of Christian asceticism which was then in process of rapid growth. In contrast to the evil character of Eunomius St. Gregory repeatedly cites the exemplary life of his brother St. Basil. Likewise, with admiration and perhaps some pardonable hyperbole, he delineates the edifying way of life of his beloved sister St. Macrina the Younger and of the group of virgins who lived in a religious community with her. He here singles out complete purity as the outstanding virtue, as he does also in the case of the life of St. Basil. He likewise ob-

serves that among ascetics living in religious communities in his day, chastity was a virtue highly esteemed and in general faithfully practiced.

A notable phase of fourth century social life to which St. Gregory makes significant reference is the making of pilgrimages to the Holy Land. Letter II the theme of which is to admonish ascetics—both men and women—of the moral dangers to which they expose themselves in undertaking such pilgrimages, besides being interesting in itself, presents corroborating evidence of the widespread popularity of the making of pilgrimages to the Holy Land in St. Gregory's day. It also testifies to the difficult conditions under which they must be made, and especially to the spiritual perils to which all pilgrims—and in particular ascetics—were exposed.

This and several other letters reflect the well known fact of the physical difficulties of travel in the fourth century. Two allusions nevertheless attest the presence at that time in backward Cappadocia of some fairly wide roads surfaced probably by hard packed dirt. One of these highways in the mountainous district was marked by milestones which would seem to indicate that it was one of the roads which Rome had been at pains to construct throughout Cappadocia after she had annexed that province. Several references bear witness that the means of travel on land included travel on foot, on horseback, or in some sort of conveyance and that conditions were such that at times one had to employ all three methods in the same journey, as was St. Gregory's experience on at least one occasion. However, he made a visit to Jerusalem and Arabia in comparative comfort, for he declares that through the courtesy of the Roman emperor he and his companions were allowed the use of a conveyance. In this he seems to have been making use of the *Cursus Publicus* which was, of course, then in the period of its most efficient organization.

Stopping-places on journeys presented another problem to the traveller in the fourth century. In his travels St. Gregory had the opportunity to observe conditions characteristic of public hospices, though he himself did not need to patronize them since persons of his rank were taken care of otherwise by the state. He declares that inns in eastern regions "show a high degree of license and indif-

ference to evil." Since most pilgrims would be obliged to avail themselves of such undesirable lodgings during many stages of their journey he maintains that this exigency is a strong argument against the making of pilgrimages by ascetics, for it necessarily precludes most religious observances customary to their way of life. Above all, the chastity which is inseparable from it is endangered, he says, by a certain looseness of behavior which is unavoidable while on a journey.

There were, of course, sections of the East in the fourth century where even the worst of inns were not available and travellers were forced to spend the night in the open, as was the case with St. Gregory's party on at least one occasion.

Some of St. Gregory's allusions to places by name are both interesting and informative. The places in the Holy Land which he mentions as being specially venerated in his day are: Bethlehem, the Anastasis, the Mount of Olives, and Golgotha. Several references reflect the fact that Galatia was held in bad repute. The description of the estate at Vanota on the banks of the Halys contains many items informative of the sort of buildings, food, plants and animals to be found on such an estate in the fourth century.

A rather prominent feature of fourth century life in its social aspects was letter-writing. Though the extant letters of St. Gregory are few in number when compared with the prolific output of many of his contemporaries, still they bear witness, directly or indirectly, to the epistolary art as well as to the customs and means of letter-writing in his day. In general this evidence, while often interesting in itself, is of value chiefly in filling in the details of the picture outlined by other sources.

St. Gregory's allusions to letters which he had written but which are not extant make it reasonable to suppose that like other educated men of his day he frequently was engaged in writing letters.

The interesting variety in the subject-matter of the *Letters* and in the occasions which provoked them gives an idea of the manifold interests and contacts of a fourth century bishop as well as of the diversity of his correspondence. Some are purely social letters and there are two business letters. Then, too, religious matters and church discipline often afforded occasions for letters in the fourth as in other centuries.

Two epistles bear witness that intercessory letters played some part in St. Gregory's correspondence. In this he was, of course, typical of his times, for the increasing power and prestige of Christian bishops in the fourth century led many of them to use their influence in civil administration in the interests of charity and justice.

Several epistles have to do mainly with St. Gregory's own personal affairs and are therefore rich in biographical material. One contains matter of interest not only to biographers of St. Gregory himself but also to those of his pious sister, St. Macrina the Younger. These letters, despite the bias resulting from the author's melancholy and pessimistic attitude in the face of difficulties, are valuable not only for biography but likewise for much that they reveal of the difficulties and activities which made up the pattern of life of a fourth century bishop.

Something of the temper of the times is further attested by the reticence exhibited in some letters. The fact that the carriage and delivery of private letters was mostly a private concern in the fourth century—and consequently extremely precarious—was reason enough for reticence. On the other hand, epistolographers in that day frequently intended their letters to reach a wide circle of readers, even though addressed to a single correspondent.

Since in the absence of a formal treatise on the subject dating from antiquity, the theory of the ancient letter must be deduced by us from references in literature and from what we can observe in the epistles we possess, the *Letters* of St. Gregory of Nyssa form an important part of the source material for such a study. Like other educated men of his day if he desired a hearing he had to conform in his writings to the standards of style acceptable to the literati among his contemporaries, both pagan and Christian. Hence, his letters as well as theirs are instructive of what were these tacit norms of epistolography.

It is evident, for example, that convention demanded that the letter—howsoever elaborately phrased—give the impression of effortless composition.

Like many contemporary writers, both pagan and Christian, our author, reflecting the rhetorical tradition relative to the exordium of a speech, begins nearly all his letters with an elaborate, formal,

often graceful introductory paragraph. The conclusions of the *Letters*, like the introductions, show that some liberty in form was consonant with the epistolary norms of his day and that the tradition of the oration seems to have prevailed over the tradition of the letter in epistolography.

From references in the *Letters* and from a study of the comparative length of St. Gregory's extant epistles it is evident that with St. Gregory Nazianzen he recognizes the advisability of trimming the length of the letter to suit the subject. It also becomes apparent that the Bishop of Nyssa catering to the contemporary literary taste wrote by preference brief, carefully polished letters, though at times he was compelled by his subject to write at greater length.

The *Letters* also attest that both St. Gregory and at least some of his correspondents shared the penchant for elaborate rhetoric so characteristic of educated circles in the fourth century. Rhetorical figures abound and there is consequently much artificiality of expression. St. Gregory makes the frequent use of conventional titles of address typical of the writers of his century.

There are some allusions to the mechanics of letter-writing. Several corroborate the fact that it was the usual custom to dictate letters to secretaries. At times, however, St. Gregory was forced to do his own writing, since he was not always able to secure the services of a secretary.

One reference is made to the materials then used commonly for letter-writing.

Still another phase of fourth century social life upon which some light is cast by casual references in the *Letters* and the *Contra Eunomium* is that of the customs and manners of the day. The value of this information is partly in corroborating what other sources have told us of these matters. But it also is of service in throwing light upon the attitude and point of view of the common people whose significant—if obscure—role in the history of a period is too often passed over in silence. Scattered references present a composite picture of the simple, often boorish, folk who then formed the larger part of the population of Cappadocia and its environs. It would seem that they were coarse and crude of manner, gullible, easily duped, alert for novel entertainment and

hence a ready prey for demagogues. Several allusions show them displaying both joy and sorrow in a very demonstrative fashion. Further, their general attitude toward various aspects of social life is incidentally attested by many references. Trivial and commonplace though many of these items may be of themselves, in the aggregate they are interesting and often illuminating.

They bear witness in a small way to such matters as the degree of honor and respect accorded superiors by inferiors; the disposition of kindness and loyalty often manifested by neighbors and kinsmen toward one another; an attitude of admiration for the power of endurance possessed by women coupled with a distinct conviction of the superiority of the male; the casual use of an ancient and uncharitable commonplace by a fourth century bishop as evinced by his proverbial allusions to the inane garrulity of old women; the existence also, however, of an attitude of respect and reverence toward old age. In like manner mention is made of the physical attractions admired by St. Gregory's contemporaries and considered special marks of beauty.

Allusions to children which he employs by way of comparison are few but are so vividly etched as to indicate that this fourth century bishop was an interested and sympathetic observer of the ways of children, an attitude not unlike that apparent in St. Augustine some years later as Bishop of Hippo.

Several references furnish interesting information upon the attitude of some of St. Gregory's contemporaries toward certain professions and trades. The persistence, to some extent at least, of the snobbish attitude toward toil which had prevailed in earlier times especially among the Greeks and Romans is implied by St. Gregory's assumption that it will count against Aëtius if he reminds his audience that the latter was at one time "engaged in that scorching and vulgar trade" of smith.

In another reference he implies that the attitude of his audience toward agricultural toil differed from that which they felt toward some other kinds of labor and that they agreed with him in regarding it as an honest and respectable occupation.

Elsewhere it is implied that in his day the offices of consul, general, and praetorian prefect were considered as honorable occupations as also was the teaching of rhetoric or philosophy.

The sick and those suffering from any bodily affliction were normally regarded with pity by St. Gregory's contemporaries, according to his few references to the subject, but it is also implied that this attitude was not universal, an observation which might, of course, apply to almost any age.

It is interesting to note that St. Gregory considers it effective to berate Eunomius more than once for opposing the opinion of the majority, implying thereby that the accepted notion among his contemporaries was that it ought to be a decisive factor in controversial matters.

A coarseness of mental outlook on the part of many people of his day is attested by the circumstance that St. Gregory declares that some of his audience will consider it blameworthy in him if he does not surpass Eunomius in his use of invective and abusive language. The enumeration of the abusive epithets employed by Eunomius against St. Basil, besides witnessing to this crude mental attitude, also gives an idea of what epithets were commonly considered most offensive and hence that opprobrium attached in general to the qualities and occupations thus mentioned.

Further evidence of mental bias in some quarters in his day is to be found in St. Gregory's explicit statement that many ascetics then were prone to attach an exaggerated value to the practice of making pilgrimages to the Holy Land.

Interesting sidelights can also be gleaned with regard to the fourth century attitude to two nationalities. St. Gregory refers quite casually as if it were a well known fact to the ill repute of Galatia in his day. In like manner he adverts to the reputation for shrewdness enjoyed by the Armenians.

Several references seem to indicate that there was pronounced cleavage between the social classes in that segment of fourth century society in which St. Gregory moved.

From the very casual character of two allusions made to beggars in the *Contra Eunomium* we may infer that many of St. Gregory's contemporaries accepted as commonplace the existence of a class of people who were forced to eke out a living characterized by extreme want. He represents his brother St. Basil, on the contrary, as having such sympathy for the poor that he spent his patrimony unsparingly on them.

These rather nondescript references to attitudes are, of course, informative of the abstract side of fourth century social life and attain the proper perspective only when ranged with like items gleaned from other sources. Quite different in character because more concrete are the few allusions to such features of social life as dwellings, food, clothing, etc.

Several references are made to clothing such as the tunic with its girdle, the pallium, the double cloak, and the gray cloak traditionally worn by philosophers.

In the *Contra Eunomium* by way of illustration casual mention is made of sports and amusements with some frequency. The Letters also have some few allusions of this kind. Since the length and arduous character of the *Contra Eunomium* make it doubtful that it appealed to a wide audience the numerous allusions to wrestling which it contains may or may not appeal to Cappadocian familiarity with the sport. Many details are mentioned, such as the place and conditions of the contest, the cheering of the audience, and the methods employed by the contestants.

A number of allusions to drinking bouts and intoxication occur in the *Contra Eunomium* and confirm what we know from other sources of the widespread prevalence of the evil of drink in the fourth century. The references are merely casual and occur by way of illustration. Because of the nature of the works here being studied no significance attaches, of course, to the fact that St. Gregory does not concern himself in them with the moral implications of the evil of drunkenness.

The drama was still an important social feature in the fourth century. St. Gregory alludes to tragedy far oftener than to comedy, but all the references are too casual to afford grounds for conclusions regarding the relative popularity of these branches. In one instance he describes in some detail the pantomimic performances which other sources tell us were much frequented in his day.

A game of ball which was popular in the fourth century is described in detail by St. Gregory by way of illustration.

His account of a method of snaring wild beasts, while it may or may not refer to Cappadocian practice, is interesting because of its coincidence with a method widely practiced in ancient times.

The *Letters* and the *Contra Eunomium* contain a few references

to military matters. These allusions are of such a sort that it is impossible to conclude whether St. Gregory had gained his knowledge from first-hand observation and was thus reflecting contemporary usage.

Two brief references testify to the existence of slavery in fourth century Cappadocia.

The burial of the dead is also attested by a casual allusion.

Despite St. Gregory's preoccupation with things spiritual in the *Letters* and the *Contra Eunomium* occasional mention is made of the political life of his times. These allusions may be briefly summed up in the following categories: relations between Church and State; personages and events in current fourth century political life; and civil administration and officials. Most of the items though somewhat trivial are interesting in themselves, and a few are important to historians of the period as source material.

The testimony of other sources regarding the varying fortunes of the Church in her relations with Imperial Rome in the fourth century is confirmed by St. Gregory's allusions to this phase of political life. Interference in the election of bishops and in the appointment of other officials of the Church was a privilege to which the State increasingly laid claim. St. Gregory gives interesting confirmation of this fact in his account of the removal of Athanasius from his bishopric at Alexandria by imperial command and his being succeeded by nominees of the heretical emperor and his religious party. He also declares that ecclesiastical office was one of the enticements employed to lure Christians to conform to the tenets of a heretical emperor with regard to faith.

St. Gregory testifies likewise to the well known circumstance that when the emperor happened to profess the orthodox Christian faith (that of Nicaea) heretics were dealt with by the State as malefactors. He makes casual mention, for example, of the exiling of heretics by the civil government because of their faith. But he likewise attests that the interest of the State in the affairs of the Church was not an unmixed blessing, for, given an emperor of the heretical belief, the Church was persecuted.

He writes in some detail of the persecution of the Church in the East by the Emperor Valens in his endeavor to force Arianism upon her. For details of this persecution the *Contra Eunomium* is in fact one of the primary sources and has been recognized as such

by some modern historians. From it may be learned the time, the geographic extent, the methods employed, the names of the fawning officials who were the tools of Valens in the persecution. In striking contrast St. Gregory delineates the staunch courage of the majority of the orthodox in resisting, and in particular the fortitude of the people of Cappadocia who looked for leadership and inspiration to the dauntless St. Basil. The latter won the respect of the aggressors to such a degree, his brother declares, that they desisted finally from their machinations against the faith in the region where he had jurisdiction.

The *Letters* also reflect in a small way the fact that during the periods when the Church was in favor with the government ecclesiastical officials, especially bishops, had increasing power and influence in civil affairs.

Several personages and events in fourth century political history are mentioned casually: for example, the former prominence of Nicomedia prior to the rise of Constantinople and likewise the recent destruction of the public buildings of Nicomedia; also the great famine which occurred in Cappadocia shortly before St. Basil became bishop. In more detail is recounted the death of the prefect Domitian together with a quaestor named Montius at the hands of the Emperor Gallus, and the subsequent execution of Gallus by Constantius partly as punishment for the deed. St. Gregory declares that Aëtius was implicated also in the crime but managed to escape punishment.

There are a few allusions to civil administration and officials, allusions which though often trivial enough in themselves betray that even remote Cappadocia was still acutely conscious in the fourth century of the strong hand of its Roman masters, but that it was not completely intimidated thereby.

He makes specific reference to four emperors: Gallus, Constantius, Valens, and Theodosius. He alludes also to other public officials: the Praefectus Praetorio Orientis, comes, praeses, consul, overseer of an aqueduct, imperial cook.

III

The *Letters* and the *Contra Eunomium* are rich in allusions which reflect the intellectual life of the times. Although St.

Gregory of Nyssa did not have the formal training common to such of his contemporaries as St. Basil and St. Gregory Nazianzen, he seems nevertheless to have possessed the sort of education typical of the man of letters of his day, for the references pertaining to intellectual life bear out what other sources tell us of it. It is evident that he shares the opinion of the Fathers nearly contemporaneous with him that pagan learning is a necessary part of formal education, but that its use must be governed by the interests and advantage of the Faith. Like them he decries profane letters in works the structure, language, and allusions of which betray that the author must have been thoroughly steeped in the best traditions of classical literature. He acknowledges that in the early days of his tutelage the study of rhetoric had had a strong attraction for him, and his writings betray that this attraction greatly influenced his style ever after.

The range of his interest in fields other than literature and rhetoric, howsoever he came by it, is indicated in some measure by casual references in the *Letters* and the *Contra Eunomium* alone and is instructive as to what intellectual achievement in the fourth century could be without benefit of formal training in the schools. These allusions imply at least a cursory acquaintance with geometry, astronomy, medicine, grammar, the physical sciences, and philosophy. Like the typical product of formal education in his day St. Gregory thus seems to have reflected a great emphasis on rhetoric and belles-lettres and a polite second-hand acquaintance with other fields of knowledge available at the time.

With regard to the extent and availability of formal training in Cappadocia and its environs in the fourth century some items of information can be gleaned from the *Letters* and the *Contra Eunomium*. In one instance St. Gregory refers explicitly to the illiteracy prevalent in his native Cappadocia. Several other casual references, however, imply that some children in fourth century Cappadocia and its vicinity were being taught writing and grammar at least.

A letter to his brother Peter provides an interesting sidelight upon the inconvenience consequent upon the limited circulation of literary works in the fourth century.

It is almost trite to remark that the culmination of the Roman

program of education was rhetoric. Other studies such as literature, philosophy, and the sciences were pursued only for what they could contribute to the perfection of the art of rhetoric. This was, of course, the program still followed in the fourth century wherever there were schools in the Roman world. It is interesting therefore to note that St. Gregory complains to a sophist friend that there is in his day a growing lack of interest in the study of rhetoric among the younger generation.

In the fourth as in preceding centuries the teachers par excellence of rhetoric were the sophists. Since the study of rhetoric held such preëminence, and since teaching had come, by the fourth century, to be a recognized and lucrative profession, these sophists were frequently highly esteemed by many of their contemporaries. Their show of erudition and their skill in declamation dazzled most of their simpler listeners and won enthusiastic admiration and applause. Some few sophists gained the sincere approbation even of the more discerning by reason of their genuine accomplishment. There is ample evidence, for example, in the *Letters* that cordial relations existed between St. Gregory and at least two sophists—Libanius and Stagirus.

On the other hand, there also was manifest especially in Christian circles distrust and disapprobation of "the tribe of the sophists"—to use St. Gregory's scornful appellation—with all its works and pomps. This disapproval was based not only upon a natural prejudice against them as representatives of the pagan tradition but also upon considerations similar to some which had prompted Plato's criticism of their forerunners in his day: their inanity and their making a trade of knowledge. St. Gregory capitalizes on the attitude of animosity toward the sophists as a class on the part of the audience to which he appeals—and incidentally testifies to the existence of that attitude—by building up the case against Eunomius with frequent reference to manifestations of sophistic practice on the part of his antagonist. He repeatedly refers to him disparagingly as "the sophist." He levels against him as if it might count heavily against him the traditional criticisms of sophists mentioned above: his inanity—employing elaborate rhetoric to clothe vain and empty ideas; his making a trade of knowledge—in "making a fat living" by teaching his heretical doctrines.

Scornful allusions to those who listened with pleasure to the elaborate rhetoric of Eunomius witness to the existence of two antagonistic standards of taste in sophistic rhetoric: one appealing to the admirers of Eunomius, and the other, a superior one, cultivated by those with whom St. Gregory liked to associate himself in such matters. In order to discredit Eunomius as thoroughly as possible especially with the latter group, St. Gregory criticizes in detail from the point of view of rhetoric the style of his opponent's works. He thus incidentally furnishes some interesting information regarding the rhetorical idiosyncracies of fourth century sophists.

These references together with a few gleaned from the *Letters* attest that sophists regularly endeavored to compensate for the shallow and sterile character of the ideas in their oral discourses by a spirited and dramatic presentation. Demonstrative and exaggerated gestures, varying intonations of the voice, the forced introduction of stock expressions and pet topics, the lavish use of rhetorical figures were some of the devices they employed.

As St. Gregory points out these evidences of the Sophistic in Eunomius' style, he bears unwitting testimony to what constituted the sophistic manner in his eyes, and by implication in those of his contemporaries. Further, his references to what he calls "the empty rattlings of the sophisms of Eunomius" are designed to reveal the latter as a flagrant violator of what St. Gregory and his intellectual associates considered standards of good taste in rhetoric.

This stratagem appears rather abortive, to be sure, in the light of St. Gregory's own excessive and exaggerated use of the very rhetorical devices which he condemns in Eunomius—the while he protests his simplicity of style, contrasting it with Eunomius' turgescence. In this paradoxical behavior, however, St. Gregory is but conforming to a convention widely subscribed to by many of his contemporaries. Like most of the Church Fathers of the fourth century he was sensitive to the conflicting of Christian ideals with the pagan culture which formed the basis of formal education whether imbibed in schools or not. Since rhetoric was an important part of that program of studies it shared the obloquy of pagan letters and was, at least in theory, proscribed with them by churchmen zealous for the integrity of the Faith. They claimed

no dependence upon it in their writings and sermons but actually they could scarcely cast off completely a vehicle of expression in which they had been thoroughly schooled, and so well adapted besides to the exigencies of the defense and propagation of the Faith.

Whereas some of these Fathers of the Church, for example St. Basil, succeeded in avoiding rhetorical extravagance though making use in their preaching and writing of early training in rhetoric, St. Gregory of Nyssa on the contrary succeeded only in being the most sophistic of them all, despite his conventional protests. Both the *Letters* and the *Contra Eunomium* reveal painstaking attention to style and are replete with rhetorical extravagance. Despite the tutorial circumstances in which he had received his education, these works thus reveal him as a typical product of fourth century rhetorical training. And precisely because he was the least successful of the literary lights of fourth century Church in getting away from the artificiality of contemporary rhetoric in his writings, he furnishes the richest source of them all for a study of the flowering of that rhetoric in the Second Sophistic.

Two distinct currents in rhetoric—Asianism and Atticism—formerly rivals in the world of letters and mutually antagonistic, blended in the fourth and early fifth centuries to produce what is called the Second Sophistic. Imperial patronage and the more respected literary men of the day, however, remained partial to Atticism and maintained an attitude of aloofness toward Asianism. Thus, St. Gregory, himself a product of the Second Sophistic and therefore exemplifying some marks of both styles in his works, is reflecting a contemporary fourth century attitude when he finds fault with Asian traits in Eunomius' style and censures his failure to measure up to certain standards of excellence set by the Atticists.

It is certainly a curious fact that St. Gregory undoubtedly regards as effective polemical material, ably lending support to theological arguments in a religious controversy, the exposition of what he considers Eunomius' deficiencies as a rhetor. Therein resides additional testimony to the prominence of rhetoric at that time and its widespread appeal to the fourth century mind.

Several other conclusions emerge from the references to rhetoric from the *Letters* and the *Contra Eunomium* assembled in the

preceding pages. They attest at least two conflicting standards of taste in matters within the province of rhetoric. The one, subscribed to by St. Gregory and his circle, was somewhat conservative, admired restraint and simplicity in all things at least in theory, valued content above form. The other, that of Eunomius and his kind, frankly took pleasure in the bizarre, the strange, the extravagant, in bombastic grandiloquence, with little regard for the thought thus embodied. The latter group acclaimed the dispensers of this brand of rhetoric: the professional sophists. The other faction, though paying a meed of praise to a few individual sophists, scorned them collectively as deceivers and pretenders—veritable intellectual charlatans.

Subsidiary to rhetoric and yet playing an important part in the program of education during the first centuries of our era was the study of pagan letters. St. Gregory's attitude toward and employment of pagan letters is typical of that of other fourth century churchmen. Like them he tolerated merely the acquaintance with pagan literature required to equip the student with the intellectual tools necessary for the study and understanding of Scripture and for the refutation of heresy, but turned a specious frown upon any further use or enjoyment of profane letters. However, he still intelligently appreciated their esthetic qualities and did not refrain completely from purely decorative allusion to or quotation from some of these authors for the sake of imparting elegance to what he had to say; further he was often involuntarily indebted to them for elements of style and syntax. Taken as a whole his references to pagan poets and orators are scanty and vague and decorative while the allusions to the philosophers are employed for his polemical purposes.

His few commonplace references to myth and legend further attest his penchant for decorative allusiveness.

The traditional Alexander turns up once in the *Letters*.

It is interesting to note that traces of some Alexandrian traits persist in a writer like St. Gregory so typical of his times in so many respects. We may mention, for example, the occasional gratuitous display of erudition, humanitarianism, the recounting of tall tales with an air of credibility, a love of nature, and, of course, his allusiveness.

Though rhetoric and belles-lettres predominated in the intellectual life of the fourth century, the embryonic sciences of the day had their own minor role to play.

The science of linguistics properly so-called was then, of course, undreamed of. But St. Gregory and not a few of his educated contemporaries shared in the curiosity which had plagued many minds before their time regarding the nature and relationship of languages. Speculation about the origin of languages particularly intrigued them and provoked many naïve comments.

St. Gregory makes it plain in the *Contra Eunomium* that he subscribes to the theory of a single language as the source of all others, a notion which was by no means uncommon in antiquity. Instead of thinking of the mother tongue as a primitive language long extinct in its original form, however, they assented to the idea that the source of all languages could be discovered in a language still living at that time.

The theory that languages are of divine origin had some adherents in the fourth century among whom was Eunomius, according to St. Gregory. In answer he places himself in a contrary school by flatly declaring, "Human language is the invention of the human understanding."

St. Gregory attests by several references the persisting multilingualism in Cappadocia in his day where the mass of the people spoke a local tongue and authors wrote Greek.

He incidentally witnesses to the pronunciation of the Latin *c* as *x* in "caelum" when he transliterates the word as *καίλουμ*.

St. Gregory's hazards at etymology like others of his time are the product of a combination of ingenuity, imagination and naïveté.

Before summing up evidences derived from the *Letters* and the *Contra Eunomium* with regard to the fourth century acquaintance with the natural sciences, it may be useful to recall that science in its present-day connotation has been a post-Renaissance preoccupation and therefore something quite different from fourth century "science." A considerable body of knowledge had been assembled in some branches in previous centuries, it is true, but it could not easily be disseminated, investigation was not yet conditioned by the scientific method, nor was there as yet an adequate scientific background into which newly discovered facts could be fitted. The

criteria for accepting or rejecting speculations on scientific matters were such arbitrary considerations as their apparent common sense, or their adaptability for exegesis, or the authority of the author.

In this state of things it is not surprising that most educated men felt free to dabble in scientific matters in their writings. St. Gregory is no exception in this for he practices a great deal of casual allusiveness to scientific data, making use of the cursory gleanings of the scientific notions of the time available to him through conversation or compendia or elsewhere. Such casual allusions in the *Letters* and the *Contra Eunomium* form a worth-while source of information about the non-professional scientific knowledge of that day and throw some light on scientific allusiveness as a contemporary mannerism.

Though St. Gregory manifests frank interest in scientific matters he makes no pretence to be a man of science. However, he has no quarrel with scientists nor does he try to assign a miraculous cause to explain natural phenomena however much they provoke his wonder. He prefers to admit his own inability to give an explanation and likewise, if such be the case, the inability of contemporary scientific men to do so.

His allusions to astronomical data in the *Letters* and the *Contra Eunomium* comprise a curious miscellany of information and misinformation. He is aware that stars and planets differ in size and move in a fixed orbit; also that eclipses of these and of the sun occur by reason of this movement; that the four seasons of the year are caused by the amount of distance of the sun from the earth; that the light and heat given off by the sun are tempered by the air intervening between the sun and the earth; that sunlight is necessary for the growth of plants; that the light of the moon is borrowed from the sun; and he knows the chief facts about the solstice and the equinox. He shares the common error of his times, however, that the sun rather than the earth moves, a view which witnesses to the enduring influence of Aristotle who had held strongly to the geocentric theory.

St. Gregory apparently follows Aristotle also in subscribing to the theory of the sphericity of the earth. Though many educated men in the fourth century likewise supported this idea, it was then by no means universally approved. If St. Gregory is aware that

many of his notions on science stem from Aristotle he makes no mention of it, a procedure consistent, of course, with the attitude he manifests toward Aristotle as a philosopher.

A single casual and disparaging reference to the science of astrology reveals in him the hostile attitude typical of that which the Churchmen of his day exhibited toward astrology which then was enjoying great popularity with the vast majority of both pagans and Christians.

By way of illustration St. Gregory makes several observations which are of interest because they give an idea of the sort of botanical information possessed by a typical educated man of the fourth century.

St. Gregory's two references which contain geographical data indicate that he had the general notions current in his day regarding geography, based probably upon the works of Strabo, Poseidonius, Ptolemy, and the like.

From his few rather indifferent references to mathematics, used by way of illustration, we may gather that with regard to the then available mathematics St. Gregory had the cursory knowledge considered desirable in an educated man of his day.

As in the other sciences his ideas about physics seem to have been guided by the teachings of the natural philosophers which were then in general circulation and especially by the views popularized by Aristotle. This may be seen, for example, in his explanation of the quality of heaviness. It is interesting to find him cognizant of the fact that sound cannot be made in a vacuum; also that lightning precedes thunder and that the flash has a definite connection with the noise. He alludes to the doctrine of the four elements—earth, air, fire, water—in the jargon popularized by Aristotle and others. It is interesting, but not surprising, that he manifests an attitude of scorn for those who subscribe to the atomic theory of the Epicureans, characterizing it as foolishness. In his day the theory of atoms was still relegated by most people to the oblivion into which it had been cast by the condemnation of Plato and Aristotle. It may be noted that this is the only instance of hostility expressed by him toward natural philosophers.

With reference to zoology it is apparent from two allusions in the *Contra Eunomium* that St. Gregory held the erroneous belief

current in his day regarding the spontaneous generation of lower animals. Some indication of the general information available to a non-professional man in his day with regard to the natural process of generation and birth of human beings and of animals is evident from his frequent references to the subject by way of illustration.

St. Gregory like other patristic writers alludes frequently to matters within the province of medical science. Since he was neither a physician nor a student of medicine, these allusions give incidental information about the non-professional medical knowledge current in the fourth century among the educated. It is quite evident from St. Gregory's references to disease that he recognized that it proceeds from natural causes and that natural remedies are effectual for its cure. He speaks of the healing art as a gift of God which human nature has gradually discovered how to use, and his allusions imply that it was held in good repute in his day.

He mentions specifically the disease of leprosy, the symptoms of paralysis, and the inability of the healing art to cure cancer. In several instances he refers to diseases of the eyes and to afflictions of the mind such as phrenitis and melancholy. In allusions used by way of illustration he gives evidence of a fairly accurate acquaintance with the symptoms of disease and with the possibility of contagion in some cases. He views with some skepticism the account of a psychological cure effected by the hearing of good news.

St. Gregory's few references to the use of drugs and poisons are rather colorless and commonplace, and it is difficult to determine whether they proceed from actual observation and so reflect contemporary fourth century practice, or have been culled from reading and hearsay.

An interesting allusion in the *Contra Eunomium* implies that the fourth century in general had scant knowledge of the actual anatomy of the ant; and that it had knowledge in considerable detail of the anatomy of larger animals.

The *Contra Eunomium* contains several allusions to physiological matters used by way of illustration. In these St. Gregory manifests again the deep interest in physiology revealed in some of his other writings, and especially in his treatise "On the Making of Man." Even on face value it is interesting to find a fourth century church-

man making detailed observations upon physiology. Since he is dealing with such matters non-professionally, these observations are some index of current fourth century physiological lore available to an educated man. He gives, for example, a minute description of the functioning of the organs of speech. Again, he outlines in detail what was evidently the currently accepted explanation of the transformation which food undergoes in nourishing the body.

Though St. Gregory's allusiveness to these and other matters within the province of the science of medicine was a manifestation of a mannerism typical of the educated man of letters of his day it does presuppose nevertheless at least a cursory background of knowledge in that field. Most of the medical allusions in the *Letters* and the *Contra Eunomium* are of the general and non-professional sort that would not indicate any extensive study in the field of medicine. The information seems to have been gained chiefly by observation and from conversations with physicians or others. The references to anatomy and physiology, however, seem to have been derived from some more solid authority and so probably reflect literature on the subject then available in some shape or other.

IV

References pertaining to the Christian religion abound in the *Contra Eunomium* and the *Letters*. Those which have to do with doctrine do not concern us here, but rather the many allusions which give information about details of the Christian milieu in the fourth century, adding to or clarifying or corroborating, as the case may be, the evidence presented by other sources. Taken together they place in sharp relief several facts in particular: the open conflict in fourth century Asia Minor between orthodox Christians and the heretical groups; the part played in the conflict by the bishops; and the enduring vitality of the customs and traditions of the Church.

St. Gregory notes that in his day the Church was being besieged by heresy on all sides. Arianism in its various ramifications was the heresy then especially troublesome to the Church in Cappadocia. From allusions in the *Letters* and the *Contra Eunomium* many details of the social aspect of St. Gregory's relations with the

Arians and other heretics can be reconstructed. The picture thus formed is of necessity colored by the fact that its author was so deeply concerned in the struggle, but it is instructive both because of the incidents reported and the attitude of St. Gregory revealed in the process. It also attests the turbulence of the times in that a religious controversy was not a matter of dialectics and debate merely, but was also attended by much personal abuse, scheming, trickery and deeds of violence.

St. Gregory refers specifically to the fact that in his day the Faith has already been clearly defined and that the criterion of orthodoxy is conformity with the doctrine of "those who set forth at Nicaea the correct and sound faith." His references to heretics are all concerned with members of the various more or less organized groups in his day who persisted in recalcitrance to some of the teachings of the main body of the Church which unreservedly subscribed to the Nicene Creed.

Between the orthodox group and the heretical factions open warfare frequently blazed up, and in his capacity of Bishop of Nyssa St. Gregory became a protagonist of consequence in the fray. In the *Letters* particularly there is much evidence testifying to the sort of activities incidental to the struggle. Several references attest, for example, that when a see was temporarily without a leader because of the death or absence of its bishop, the circumstance was often the signal for a burst of energy on the part of the heretical faction both in disseminating their erroneous doctrines and in trying to supplant or replace the orthodox bishop by their own candidate.

As a result of the activities of heretical groups supported by the civil government in fact, St. Gregory himself was forced to spend two periods of enforced absence from his see of Nyssa.

In several of his letters he dwells at length upon the sufferings, mental and physical, which he endured at the hands of heretical groups, though it is not always possible to say to which period of St. Gregory's life these references apply. At any rate, while allowing for the fact that such testimony is colored by his sensitive and querulous nature, still it has something to tell us of the great activity of heretics in the East in the fourth century in their efforts to gain control of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, the means they some-

times employed, and the mutual attitude of heretic and orthodox toward one another.

St. Gregory details the actual physical discomfort inflicted upon him by heretics as well as the more painful attrition of a cold and malicious attitude of hostility which they manifested to him. Prominent ecclesiastic though he was, they did not hesitate to call his orthodoxy in question, a fact which testifies further to the unsettled character of the times.

As regards the attitude of heretic and orthodox toward one another, according to St. Gregory heretics in his day were filled with hatred for those who opposed them. It is no surprise that he believed that all culpable animosity in the struggle was on the part of the heretical faction. He contrasts with the bitter hostility of Eunomius the admirable charity of his brother St. Basil in dealing with the heretics. However, despite St. Gregory's undoubted appreciation of the desirability of such dispositions, the tone of the *Contra Eunomium* reveals an attitude on the part of its author in keeping with the spirit of the times and reminiscent of Old Testament ideas regarding God's enemies. A casual statement in the letter addressed to three pious ladies living in Jerusalem implies that the idea that it is lawful to hate "God's enemies"—that is, heretics, idolators, and Jews—was acceptable among his orthodox contemporaries.

Several allusions to pagan worship occur in the *Letters* and the *Contra Eunomium*, witnessing briefly to the fact of the continuance of idolatry among some of his contemporaries. He declares that the conversion of idolators to the true faith is a feat too difficult for him to attempt.

Some reference is also made to contemporaneous fourth century Jewry in the attempt to link Eunomius with Judaism. This seems to be a matter of doctrinal polemics and not an appeal to race prejudice. The persistence among Jews in the fourth century of various ancient Jewish customs is attested by a casual allusion.

With the increasing prestige of the Church in the fourth century the importance and power of the bishops in both civil and ecclesiastical life correspondingly increased. The *Letters* especially reflect this fact, for they abound in references pertaining to the episcopacy of that day. With regard to the method of choosing a

bishop, for instance, several interesting items turn up. There is vivid testimony that because of the intestine strife in the Church between the heretics and the orthodox, frequently considerable confusion ensued upon the decease of a bishop in deciding his successor. Other sources reveal that the common and approved method of filling the vacant see of a bishop at that time was by election by a group of bishops from neighboring sees usually with the acclamation and approbation of the people. Corroboratory evidence of this is found in the several instances mentioned in the *Letters* where St. Gregory was summoned by the faithful of various cities to help them put an end to the discord raging between the opposing religious groups in their midst, by joining a group of bishops in electing a new bishop.

Letter XIX recounts that upon repairing to Sebastea in response to such a summons, St. Gregory had the curious experience—most distasteful to him—of being elected himself to the see of Sebastea while still Bishop of Nyssa. The transfer of a bishop from one see to another had been disapproved by the Church from its infancy, and prohibition of such transfers had been reiterated by Church Councils up to St. Gregory's day. The repetition of this prohibition attests that such transfers nonetheless continued to take place, testimony which St. Gregory's adventure, of course, corroborates. Though he registers numerous complaints regarding the transfer, he does not mention its invalidity among them, thus implicitly furnishing evidence—supported also by other testimony—that during the fourth century, especially in the East, the Church sometimes tolerated the transfer of a bishop when a serious exigency seemed to demand it.

St. Gregory's reference to the removal of St. Athanasius from his bishopric in Alexandria by imperial command illustrates the fact that despite the enactments of Church Councils regarding the episcopacy, the civil authority in that day sometimes took into its own hands the selection of a bishop. The experience of St. Athanasius was typical of many instances in which an Arian or Semi-Arian emperor installed a creature of his own in place of an ousted orthodox bishop.

That Church Councils found it necessary in the fourth century to make enactments recommending that in selecting a candidate for

the episcopacy his orthodoxy and good life ought to be prime considerations, implies that the choice was sometimes made with other things in view. One of the *Letters* carries with it a similar implication and gives in some detail the qualities considered desirable in a bishop by the properly instructed and well disposed Christians of his day. Capacity for spiritual leadership, St. Gregory declares, ought to outweigh distinction of family, wealth, or worldly reputation.

The growing power of the episcopacy afforded, of course, opportunity for some accumulation of wealth by bishops. Certain of St. Gregory's *Letters* corroborate the testimony of church legislation that the opportunity was not neglected. The *Letters* also testify, however, that St. Gregory, after the manner of St. Basil and some other bishops of his day, lived a simple, even an ascetic, life while Bishop of Nyssa. He displayed consistently an attitude of detachment toward wealth though in accordance with the usage of the time he was in control of the modest possessions of the Church in his see.

An allusion to the power of bishops in the fourth century to preside over the trials of fellow bishops is interesting, for it indicates something of the procedure in such cases.

The *Letters* also give some indication of the activities which might engage a fourth century bishop. He might be summoned, as St. Gregory so frequently was, by the people of a neighboring see, or assigned by a council of bishops, to put in order the affairs of a see temporarily without a bishop. Neighboring prelates often gathered for conferences on church affairs or came together to celebrate the liturgy, as St. Gregory casually mentions in the *Letters*. These activities, of course, necessitated considerable travel and the Bishop of Nyssa may be considered typical of the bishops of his day in his journeyings to Jerusalem and the Roman province of Arabia, to Nicomedia, the Pontus and elsewhere. In one of the *Letters* he describes the enthusiastic welcome accorded him upon his return from such a journey, a description interesting not only for the details it gives us of such a reception but also for the vivid picture it presents of the cordial relations existing between the bishop and his flock.

It is possible also to glean from the *Letters* some idea of the

relations of fourth century bishops with one another. St. Gregory describes, for instance, the close ties between his church and that of Nicomedia of which he mentions two bishops: Patricius and Euphrasius who had been very friendly toward him. On the other hand, he devotes a long letter to an account of friction of a personal nature between his metropolitan, Bishop Helladius, and himself. The narrative which is more human in tone than most of his letters, is interesting for the portrait it gives of two fourth century bishops "without their miters." An attitude of reverence for the priesthood among those to whom St. Gregory addressed his remarks is attested by allusions in the *Contra Eunomium*.

In his *Letters* he makes several rather informative allusions to festivals and holydays. He attests the continuance in his day of the celebration by the pagans of the Roman festival on January first. He stresses particularly the custom of giving gifts on that day.

Another letter testifies that this custom of giving gifts as part of the celebration of a festival was also a usual feature of Christian practice in fourth century Cappadocia. His explicit assertion that it was "customary" among his contemporaries to engage in a general exchange of gifts at Christmas and Easter modifies somewhat the traditional explanation of the development of the custom of gift-giving at Christmas.

This interesting letter also gives direct testimony to the date of the celebration of Christmas and of Easter during the last quarter of the fourth century and implies that these dates had not been established long enough to become commonplace to the people. St. Gregory makes it plain that when he was writing the Church in central Asia Minor had already begun to celebrate Easter each year at the full moon after the vernal equinox as designated by the Council of Nicaea. The letter is also an important addition to the list of sources indicative of the gradual spread of the observance of December twenty-fifth as Christmas, for it establishes that that date had by then been adopted in Cappadocia and its environs.

Various theories have been propounded to account for the selection by the Church of this particular date for Christmas. St. Gregory's letter may be taken as additional evidence in support of the theory which considers the choice of December twenty-fifth a

deliberate attempt to supplant the popular pagan feast of the Natalis Invicti.

It is readily apparent from the writings of the Cappadocian Fathers that the honoring of martyrs was a singularly intense cult in Cappadocia and its environs. St. Gregory refers in the *Letters* to the multiplicity of places of worship in his native land, and mentions services in honor of the martyrs in such a way as to imply that such functions were of common occurrence.

Several casual references attest some miscellaneous features of the Christian cult. An allusion in the *Letters* adds its testimony to that of other sources that during the fourth century the Sabbath was assigned a special place in the Church liturgy even though the Sunday had been substituted for it as the Lord's day.

In the *Contra Eunomium* there is a specific declaration that the following were commonly accepted features of Christian practice in fourth century Cappadocia: the sign of the cross, prayer, Baptism, the confession of sins.

Another allusion testifies incidentally to the popularity of St. Paul's writings in that day.

Several references to places of worship in the *Letters* attest that the Christians in central Asia Minor, like those in other parts of the fourth century world, savored their recently acquired freedom to meet openly for the worship of God and the honoring of His saints by building churches and chapels of as much grandeur as possible. St. Gregory specifically states that the groundplan then commonly used in a martyrion was cruciform.

In the *Letters* in some instances St. Gregory adds his testimony to that of other sources that religious communities of ascetics—those both of men and of women—living apart from the secular world according to a fixed rule had become an established part of Christian society in fourth century Cappadocia and its environs. He attests besides that chastity was considered the basic virtue of that state of life and that the religious state was regarded with esteem by his Christian contemporaries. He implies also that they looked upon it as a way of life to be followed permanently by those who adopted it. His laudatory description of the life of the community of virgins over whom his sister St. Macrina was presiding as religious superior at the time of her death is informative despite

palpable hyperbole. It furnishes evidence that the following features which are to-day still actively practiced by religious communities of women were an important part also of the life of female ascetics in the fourth century: nocturnal prayer, the observance of silence, the chanting of liturgical prayers, fasting, mortification of the senses, obedience to the superior.

An allusion in another letter attests the custom of changing one's name on entering a monastery at the act of monastic profession.

References in the *Letters* seem to indicate that St. Gregory, like St. Basil, clung to the ascetic life the communal practice of which they had both been obliged to forsake in order to assume the dignity of the episcopate. This attitude and their endeavor to continue to live according to the principles of the ascetic life after assuming the responsibilities of their respective sees, reflect the increasing spirit of Christian asceticism which strongly marked the second half of the fourth century.

In conclusion it may be repeated that the value of the *Letters* and the *Contra Eunomium* as witnesses to the life and times of the fourth century can be appraised in general as mainly corroborative of and supplementary to other sources. St. Gregory had in view objects other than the requirements of the potential historian and, of course, had no notion that these writings might be sifted diligently one day for historical data. And yet, conditioned though they are by his sensitive and querulous nature on the one hand, and by his flair for rhetoric and tendency toward diffuseness on the other, they do serve the purposes of the historian by the host of items incorporated unwittingly and casually, but reflecting many facets of the life about him. Certainly if he had set out with reportorial zeal to give us a picture of his times, it is doubtful that we should have been able to take at face value what must inevitably have partaken of some distortion and coloring from the temperament and religious loyalties of this staunch philosopher bishop. This imperfection does in fact make itself felt wherever he turns reporter in the *Letters* and the *Contra Eunomium*. He is much more trustworthy as a witness when, intent on some larger purpose, he lets fall incidentally or by implication some of the details of the teeming life of his times.

Casual allusions, however, especially as embodied in illustrations,

sometimes present their own problems as trustworthy witnesses, for it is at times difficult to determine whether they reflect first-hand observation or have been culled from compendia. Nevertheless his use of them is instructive, for his allusiveness along with such other trivialities as his partiality to rhetorical excess and his official advocacy of certain attitudes and opinions and denial of them in practice, are mannerisms witnessing both to himself as a fourth century man and to his times otherwise.

No doubt the many phases of economic, social, political, and intellectual life which are attested by the *Letters* and the *Contra Eunomium* will be further illuminated by a careful study of the other writings of St. Gregory of Nyssa.

I. INDEX NOMINUM

- Aeschylus, 121.
 Aëtius, 20, 23-24, 38, 40, 58, 67, 85, 87-88.
 Alexander the Great, 122, 197.
 Alexandria, 50.
 Alexandrianism, 122-123, 197.
 Ambrosia, 37, 44.
 Ampelis, 14.
 Amphilochius, Bishop of Iconium, 25-27, 31-33.
 Anastasis, the, 44, 48, 185.
 Ancyra, 50.
 Andamucena, 43, 50.
 Anomoeanism, 154.
 Antioch, 50.
 Arabia, Roman province of, 46, 50, 133, 184; religious strife in, 147, 161, 206.
 Argaeus, Mt., thickly forested, 9, 10, 179.
 Arianism, 85, 145-146, 153, 202-203.
 Aristotle, 115-117, 126, 129, 134-136, 200.
 Armenia, 50, 91.
 Armenians, 34, 75, 189.
 Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, 84, 157, 191, 205.
 Athanasius, Bishop of the Galatians, 58.
 Basil, St., admirable character of, 41, 153, 183; asceticism of, 159, 176-177, 209; attacked by Eunomius, 152, 204; attitude of to pagan learning, 93-94; benefactor of the poor, 76, 88, 189; defender of the Faith, 86, 89, 192; restrained use of rhetoric, 108, 196; teacher of St. Gregory, 94; sponsor of the Xenodochia, 47; praise of spring, 2.
 Basilides, 154.
 Basilissa, 37, 44.
 Bethlehem, 48, 185.
 Bithynia, 50.
 Caesarea, 9, 10, 179.
 Cappadocia, 50, climate of, 1 ff.; backwardness of, 76-77, 193; building materials of, 10, 26; cult of martyrs, 171-173, 208; fortitude of orthodox Christians, 86, 192; languages of, 125, 198; manners of, 67, 187; morals of, 39-41, 183; roads of, 45-46, 184; scarcity of timber, 7, 179; schools of, 96-97; St. Longinus, Bishop of, 167; water supply of, 11, 179; workmen of, 31, 182.
 Caria, 50, 133.
 Cerinthus, 154.
 Cilicia, 50, 133.
 Colluthius, 154.
 Constantinople, 50, 85; Council of, 164.
 Constantius, 87, 89, 192.
 Cyzicus, 150.
 Danube River, 51, 134.
 Demosthenes, Attic orator, 117-118.
 Demosthenes, tool of Valens, 86, 90-91, 148.
 Domitian, Praefectus Praetorio, 87, 192.
 Earsos, supposed town, 50.
 Egypt, 50, 133.
 Ephesus, 50.
 Epicurus, 117; atomic theory of, 136, 200.
 Eudoxius of Germanicia, 86.
 Eunomius, man of letters, 133 ff.; reviler of St. Basil, 73, 152, 183, 204; sophist, 102 ff., 194-197; teacher and scribe, 29, 40, 41, 67, 69, 97, 124, 181; trial of for heresy, 161.
 Eupatrius, 53.
 Euripides, 121.
 Eustathia, 37, 44.
 Galatia, 49, 147, 185; held in bad repute, 75, 189.
 Gallus, Roman Emperor, 87-88, 89, 192.
 George, of Cappadocia, 85.
 George, of Laodicea, 58.
 Gnosticism, 154.
 Golgotha, 44, 49, 185.

Gregory Nazianzen, St., attitude to rhetoric, 94-95; on letter-writing, 60, 187.

Gregory of Nyssa, St., asceticism of, 159, 176-177, 209; attitude of to pagan culture, 94 ff., 193 ff.; builder, 30-33, 182; Bishop of Sebastea, 39-40, 57, 67, 148-150, 205; education of, 94-96, 193; epistolographer, 51 ff., 185 ff.; exile of, 40, 67, 148; orthodoxy questioned, 151, 204; pilgrimage to Holy Land, 37, 42-44, 47-48, 75, 177, 184; poverty of, 32, 176-177; relations of with Bishop Helladius, 163-166, 207; visit to Vanota, 5-6, 15-17, 27-28, 49.

Halys River, 5, 49, 185.

Helladius, Bishop of Caesarea, 160, 163-166, 207.

Hellespont, 50, 133.

Holy Land, morality of, 38-39; pilgrimages to, 42-44, 47-49, 184.

Homer, 105, 144, 119-120, 151.

Ibora, 50, 147, 156, 161.

Iconium, skilled workmen of, 31, 50, 182.

Illyricum, 50.

Isocrates, 118.

James, St., Apostle, 167.

Jerusalem, morals in, 39, 183; pilgrimages to, 42-44, 47-48, 184, 206; religious strife in, 147, 152, 161; St. James, Bishop of, 167.

Jews, 153-155, 204.

Kelosina, 3, 50, 162.

Leontinus, Bishop of Antioch, 88.

Libanius, sophist, 53; esteemed by St. Gregory, 101-102, 194; teacher of St. Basil, 94, 100.

Libya, 50, 133.

Longinus, St., 167.

Lycia, 50, 133.

Macrina, St., 37, 41, 56, 147, 176, 183, 208-209.

Manicheism, 154.

Marcion, 154.

Modestus, Praefectus Praetorio Orientis, powers of, 90; opposed by St. Basil, 86, 89.

Montanism, 154.

Montanus, 154.

Montius, 87, 192.

Mount of Olives, 44, 49, 185.

Natalis Invicti, 171, 208.

Nicaea, Council of, 155, 157, 203, 207.

Nicolaus, 154.

Nicomedia, 87, 161, 163, 192, 206, 207.

Nile River, 51.

Nyssa, station on Roman road, 3, 9, 50, 162, 174; distance from to Pontus, 45.

Oltiseris, 49.

Osiana, location of, 9; presbyter of, 8-10.

Otreius, Bishop of Melitene, 52, 56.

Palestine, 44, 50, 133.

Pamphylia, 50, 133.

Paul, St., 174, 208.

Peneus River, 122.

Peter, St., first Bishop of Rome, 167.

Peter, St., Bishop of Sebastea, 54, 172.

Philo Judaeus, 117.

Pindar, 121.

Phoenicia, 50, 133.

Phrygia, 50.

Pisidia, 50, 133.

Plato, 105, 113, 114-115, 124, 136, 200.

Pontus, 50, 133, 206.

Propontis, 50, 133.

Sabellianism, 154.

Sebastea, cult of martyrs in, 164, 172-173; morals in, 39, 40, 51; St. Gregory, Bishop of, 68, 147-149, 156-157, 161, 205.

Stagirius, sophist, esteemed by St. Gregory, 100-101, 194; lumber transaction of, 7 ff., 33-34, 53.

Syria, 51, 134.

Tarbasthena, 50.

Theodosius, Roman Emperor, 89, 164, 192.

Theophilus, "the Blemmys," 88.

Thomas, St., Apostle, 167.
Thrace, 51, 134.

Valens, Roman Emperor, 84-86, 89-91, 148, 191-192.

Valentinus, 154.

Vanota, agricultural products of, 5, 6, 178-179; architecture of, 27-28, 181; fish-pools of, 15-17, 179-180; name and location of, 49, 185.

Vestena, 4, 50, 162.

II. INDEX RERUM

- allusiveness as a mannerism, 7, 12, 19, 127, 133, 143-144, 199, 200, 201.
 amusements, 79-81, 190.
 anatomy, 141-142, 201.
 ant, 15, 141, 201.
 apple, 5, 7, 178.
 apprenticeship to trades, 19, 180.
 aqueduct, 11, 28, 179; overseer of, 30, 91, 192.
 architects, 25, 28.
 architecture, church, 25-27, 174, 181, 208; of a country estate, 27, 181.
 army, attitude toward, 74; officers of, 82.
 asbestos, 12, 179.
 asceticism, contemporary phases of, 37-38, 41, 175-177, 183-184, 208-209.
 ascetics, pilgrimages of to the Holy Land, 43-44, 47-78, 189.
 Asianism, 109-110, 196.
 ass, 19.
 astrology, 131, 200.
 astronomy, 128-131, 199-200; place of in education, 95-96, 193.
 atomic theory, 136, 200.
 Atticism, 109-111, 196.
 bandages, 138.
 Baptism, 173, 208.
 bath, attendants and utensils, 30, 181; a courtesy to a guest, 166.
 beauty, marks of physical, 70, 188.
 bee, 15.
 beetle, 15.
 beggars, 35; attitude to, 76, 189.
 bird-lime, 12, 179.
 birds, migration of, 15, 179; song-birds, 15.
 bishops, activities of, 161-162, 206; administrators of ecclesiastical property, 159; attitude toward sophists, 100-103; election of, 85, 147, 155-157, 191, 205; power of intercession, 55, 62-63, 87; qualities of, 157-158, 206; wealth and power of, 158-160, 192, 206.
 bodyguards, 74.
 botany, 132-133, 200.
 brain, 142.
 bronze, 11, 179.
 building materials, 10, 26, 181.
 bull, 19.
 camel, 19.
 cancer, 138, 201.
 carving, 21.
 carpenters, 21, 180.
 chamomile, 7, 179.
 charlatans, 23, 180-181.
 chastity of ascetics, 41, 48, 175, 184, 185, 208.
 children, attitude to, 70-71, 188; education of, 98, 193.
 Christmas, date of celebrating, 169-171, 207-208; gifts, 169, 207.
 chronology, problem of in St. Gregory, 146 ff., 203.
 Church and State, relations of, 83 ff., 191-192, 205.
 cincture, part of religious habit, 177.
 class distinction, 75-76, 82-83, 189.
 clay, effect of heat on, 12.
 climate, 1 ff., 177.
 cloak, 77, 190.
comes, powers of, 91, 192.
 compendia, 96.
 confession of sins, 173, 208.
 contracts, in building operations, 31, 182.
 cook, of Roman Emperor, 90-91, 192.
 copper, 11, 179.
 cosmetics, 70.
 costumes of drama, 80.
 craftsmen, through training of, 20, 22, 26, 31, 180.
 cult of martyrs, 164, 171-173, 208.
Cursus Publicus, 46, 47-48, 87, 184.
 dancing, 104.
 danel, 7.
 deacons, 167-168.
 dead, burial of, 83, 191.
 dioptra, 127.
 digestion of food, 143.
 disease, attitude to, 73, 189; cause and symptoms of, 137-138, 201; cure of, 24, 139, 201.
 dog, 19.
 drama, the, 80, 190.
 drugs, 30, 140, 201.
 drunkenness, 79, 190.
 duracinus, 6.
 Easter, date of celebrating, 169-171, 207-208; exchange of gifts at, 169, 207.
 eclipses of heavenly bodies, 129, 199.
 education, 95-99, 112-113; scope of, 193.
 eel, 19.
 elements, the four, 135, 200.
 elephant, 19.
 ephetinda, a game of ball, 81, 190.
 epistolography, the letter as a literary genre, 59-65, 186-187.
 equinox, 131, 199.
 etymology, 126, 198.
 eyes, disease of, 138, 201.
 fainting, 139.
 family loyalty, 68-69, 188.
 famine, 88.
 farmer, 2, 21-22, 97-98; standard of living of, 33-34, 180.
 farming, attitude to, 72, 188.
 fig, 7, 179.
 fire, effects of, 12; method of making, 77; scientific knowledge of, 135-136.
 fish-pools of country estate, 15-17, 27, 179-180, 181.
 flea, 15.
 flint, 12.
 food, mid-day meal, 77.
 fowlers, 30.
 frog, 19.
 gall bladder, 142.
 geocentric theory, 129-130, 199.
 geography, 133-134, 200; sources of knowledge of, 133.
 geometry, 142.
 gift-giving, 80, 168-169, 207.
 gilding, 21.
 gnat, 15.
 gold, 11, 179.
 grafting of fruit trees, 132.
 grain, 6, 179.
 grammar, place of in education, 95-96, 112, 126, 193.
 grape, 5-6, 178.
 "gray-cloak," 75.

- Greek language, 125, 198.
 greeting, formulas of, 68.
 hand labor, 21.
 harmony in music, 81.
 heart, 142.
 Hebrew language, 96, 98, 124.
 hellebore, 7.
 helmsman, 22.
 heretics, exiled for religious beliefs, 85-191; relations of with Christians, 144 ff., 203 ff.
 hierarchy, attitude to superiors, 68, 188.
 honey, 7, 30, 140.
 horologium, 11.
 horse, 18; means of travel, 19, 45-46; used by women, 37, 183.
 idolatry, 153-154, 204.
 illiteracy, in Cappadocia, 97, 193.
 inns, 46-48, 184-185; the Xenodochia, 47.
 insects, 15.
 intercession, power of, 55, 62-63, 87.
 invective, 152; attitude to, 73-74, 189.
 iron, articles made of, 10, 179; good conductor, 135.
 labor, organization of, 31, 182; hand, 21; attitude to manual, 71-73, 188.
 lamb, 19.
 landscaping of an estate, 6, 179.
 language, origin of, 123, 198.
 Latin language, pronunciation of, 125, 198.
 lead, 11, 179.
 leopard, 19.
 leprosy, 138, 201.
 letter the, theory of, 59 ff., 186-187; divisions of, 60-64; length of, 60; rhetoric in, 64-65; subject-matter of, 52-57; titles of address, 65.
 letter-writing, 185-187; dictation of letters, 66; materials used in, 66; attitude to, 58-59; reticence in, 57-58.
 lightning, 4, 135, 200.
 liver, 142.
 lotus, 7.
 majority rule, 73, 189.
 mandrake, 7; anaesthetic properties of, 141.

manual labor, attitude to, 71-73, 188.
 martyrion, 25-27, 174, 181, 208.
 martyrs, cult of, 164, 171-173, 208.
 masks, 80.
 mathematics, place of in education, 95-96, 134, 193, 200.
 medical meetings, 24, 181.
 medical men, 22-24; reputation of, 139, 180, 201; charlatans, 23, 180-181.
 medicine, knowledge of, 137, 201; preparation of, 140; in education, 95-96.
 megalomania, 139.
 melancholy, 139, 201.
 milestones, 45.
 milk, as food, 143.
 mirrors, 78.
 mouse, 19.
 music, 81.
 myrrh, efficacy of in snaring pigeons, 13, 14, 179.
 New Year's Day, celebration of, 80, 168, 207.
 Nicene Creed, 89, 146-147, 151, 203.
 nightingale, 14, 179.
 oak, 5, 178.
 old age, attitude to, 70, 188.
 ox, 19.
 pagan culture, Christian attitude to, 92 ff., 193.
 pagan literature, Christian attitude to, 113-114, 193, 197.
paidotribes, 25.
 painter of portraits, 29, 181.
 pallium, 77, 190.
 pantomime, 80.
 paralysis, 138, 201.
 peach, 5, 178, 132.
 peacock, 14, 179.
 pear, 5, 178.
 persecution of the church by Valens, 84-86, 89-91, 148, 191-192.
 philosophy, place of in education, 95-96, 112, 114-117.
 phrenitis, 139, 201.
 physician, profession of, 22-24; prominence of, 23; quacks, 23, 181; spiritual, 24.
 physics, 133-136, 200.
 physiology, 142-144, 201-202.
 pigeons, method of snaring, 13-14, 179.

pilgrimages to the Holy Land, popularity of, 42-43, 189; inadvisable for ascetics, 43-44, 47-48, 185; moral dangers attending, 37, 43-44, 47-78, 184.
 plane-tree, 5, 178.
 poison, 30; dispensing of, 140.
 poverty, of the Cappadocians, 34, 182; of St. Gregory, 32, 177; religious, 177, 208.
praefectus praetorio Orientis, powers of, 90-91, 192; reputation of, 73, 188.
praeses, powers of, 91, 192.
 priesthood, reverence for, 168, 207.
 proemium of the letter, 62-63.
 pronunciation of Latin, 125, 198.
 religious life, attitude to, 175, 208; change of name in, 176, 209; poverty of, 177, 208.
 rhetoric, place of in education, 98-99, 193-194; attitude to, 94-95, 106-109, 194-197; figures of, 103, 106.
 roads, 45, 184.
 Roman Emperor, power of, 88-89.
 rose, 6, 179.
 Sabbath, the, 173, 208.
 salamander, 18, 136, 180.
 science, 126 ff.; place of in education, 95-96, 127, 193; problems of, 128.
 sea, 11, 179.
 sea-lung, 17.
 Second Sophistic, 109-112, 196.
 secretaries, 29, 66, 187.
 see of bishop, transfer of, 156-157, 205.
 serpent, 19.
 shoemaking, 21, 180.
 sign of the cross, the, 173, 208.
 slavery, 83, 191.
 smith, trade of, 19-21, 180; attitude to, 20, 71-72; wages of, 33.
 snaring of pigeons, 13-14, 179; of wild beasts, 81, 190.
 soil, 4, 178.
 soldiery, attitude to, 74; provincial, 81-82.
 solstice, 131, 199.
 sophists, attitude to, 99-103, 194-195; idiosyncracies of, 103-106, 195; remuneration of, 33-34.
 sound, theory of, 135, 200.

speech, physiology of, 142-143, 202.
 sphericity of the earth, 129-130, 199.
 spider, 15.
 spinal column, 141-142.
 spring, 2.
 stage properties, 80.
 stenography, 29-30, 181.
 stone masons, 31-33, 182.
 summer, heat of, 3.
 sun, eclipses of, 129; heliocentric theory, 129; nature of, 130-131, 199.
 sycophants, 74, 86, 90, 192.
 thunder storms, 3, 166.
 timber, scarcity of in Cappadocia, 7-9, 179.
 time, measurement of, 77.
 tin, 11, 179.
 tools, of carpenter, 21; farmer, 21-22; smith, 19-20; shoemaker, 21; weaver, 21.
 travel, 184; difficulties of, 37, 45-48; means of, 37, 45; stopping-places, 46-48; Cursus Publicus, 46, 87.
 trials, ecclesiastical, 160-161, 206.

tunic, 77, 190.
 turtle-dove, 14.
 villa, agricultural products of, 5-6, 178-179; architecture of, 27-28, 181; fish-pools of, 15-17, 27, 179-180; not common in Cappadocia, 76-77.
 vine, 5, 179; process of growth of, 132.
 virgins, 37-38, 41, 163, 176, 183, 208-209.
 wages, 32-33, 180, 182.
 wasp, 15.
 wax, effect of heat on, 12.
 wealth, indications of, 34.
 weaving, apparatus of, 21, 180.
 winter, 1-2.
 women, attitude to, 69-70, 188; means of travel, 37, 46-48, 183; status of, 36; woman of the army, 38.
 worm, 19.
 wrestling, 78-79, 190.
 writing, aid for teaching, 1, 22, 97-98.